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LATIN HYMNODY

H. V. HUGHES, M.A.

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LATIN HYMNODY

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CHURCH MUSIC MONOGRAPHS

No. 5

LATIN HYMNODY

AN ENQUIRY INTO THE UNDERLYING PRINCIPLES OF THE HYMNARIUM

BY

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INTRODUCTION

THOSE who study Church music in its function as the expression of united worship realize from time to time how small is the attention paid, in books which aim at serious study, to the Hymns. It is recognized on all hands that the solution of the difficulties which arise every now and then between "popular" and "expert" music in our churches is to be found in the hymn-book rather than in the psalter or "service." But when we turn to our bookshelves to study hymnology from the scientific and historical points of view we find that while on the literary side a good deal has been produced, from the musical standpoint there is little or nothing, especially for the earlier periods. A single monograph cannot very well expect to redress the balance, but if this book is taken in conjunction with Dr. Tillyard's "Byzantine Music and Hymnography" and Dr. Wilson's "The Chorales," both in this series, a good deal of the ground will have been covered, and to some extent covered for the first time. Again, it is quite impossible to study any branch of Church music, least of all the hymns, in isolation from their verbal structure. Perhaps this disproportion in the literature of the question exists because musicians have been content, from the very nature of the subject as it concerns them to-day, to regard hymns and hymn-tunes as "small beer." On the practical side it must be admitted that many Church musicians, among them some of the first rank, have recognized that small beer may be in its own sphere quite as good as "large" (or whatever be the right correlative). To those who prefer a clearer and better, but less homely, expression, we would remark, with St. Thomas Aquinas, "omne ens, in qua ens, bonum est." But on the theoretical side so little has been written that the author feels moved to offer this book to the student's consideration, not claiming for it that it is either original research or a compiled textbook, but that it partakes of the nature of both.

This monograph aims at discussing what is known on the subject up to the time when the German chorales and the Huguenot psalters gave birth to English hymnody, and will outline the ultimate development of the Breviary hymn into the Motet. The relationship of the Renaissance motet to the Anthem of the English Cathedral school will be found a fruitful subject for subsequent enquiry. Several examples of mediæval harmonized settings of hymn-melodies are given, and in most cases they throw direct light on certain questions of rhythm and interpretation, and are noticed in those connections: others are inserted in the hope that students of our early musical history will find in them further evidence, either of interest in the matter of hymnology, or to elucidate part of the darkness which shrouds the story of the mysterious English school of composition in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, of which nearly all the monuments have perished. It should be noticed here that the original MSS. of Durham, Lire, Worcester, etc., show no signs whatever of being merely experimental efforts: they are choirbooks, noted breviaries or antiphoners, with signs of actual use, and in one case a rubric directing the harmonized setting to be sung *in præcipuis festis.* The same remark applies, but with considerably less force, to the early sequentiales.

The sequence has a rather better claim to be connected with our modern vernacular hymnody than has the "Office hymn," though its trochaic rhythm has been less widely used than the iambic rhythm of the "Long" or "Common" metres: for in the mediæval MSS. there are occasionally to be found English versions of known or apparently lost sequences; but I can recall no instance of a Breviary hymn being translated into English for musical use earlier than the time of Cranmer.

Of the books and authorities used in the preparation of this essay, the majority are referred to in the footnotes throughout; but two of them must be mentioned separately: (*a*) Dr. Frere's "Historical Introduction to [the 1904 edition of] Hymns Ancient and Modern" (London, Clowes, 1909) remains the standard work on the history of English hymnody, and of Latin hymnody so far as it refers to the pre-Reformation uses of this island, but is unfortunately not available in a handy or inexpensive form, being bound up with a very large edition of the hymn-book in question. And (*b*) the Rev. J. Mearns' "Early Latin Hymnaries" (Cambridge, University Press, 1913) has also been of priceless service: it is one of those laborious and unpretentious works of which the value will never be realized except by the few who have opportunity to get back to the original documents, and the word of appreciation for their work is consequently rare.

CONTENTS

PAGE
INTRODUCTION - - - - - - - - v

CHAPTER I

1. RHYTHM AND METRE - - - - - - - 1
2. THE RHYTHMIC SYSTEM - - - - - - 5

CHAPTER II

1. THE METRES OF THE BREVIARY - - - - - 9
2. SEQUENCES AND ELEGIACS - - - - - - 13
3. MENSURAL THEORIES - - - - - - - 15

CHAPTER III

THE HYMN-MELODIES - - - - - - - 30
HISTORICAL ACCURACY OF THE MELODIES - - - - 39

CHAPTER IV

THE FINAL DEVELOPMENT OF THE FORM - - - - 54

LATIN HYMNODY

CHAPTER I.

1. *RHYTHM AND METRE.*

OF the historical hymns of the Church in the West, the Latin hymns are the oldest. For this reason they are to some the most important, to others the least important. To the former no apology is needed for a monograph upon them; to the latter we would maintain that, though venerably old, they are also eternally new. Their origin takes us back to the fourth century, to a time when the official language of the Church was not Latin, but Greek. They were, as we shall see later, in their earliest days a striving after vernacular expression, in musical as well as in literary form. There is nothing merely archaic or quaint about the appeal which their verses and melodies make to us to-day, for it is an appeal of life and vigour; they are the poems of men steeped in Holy Scripture and its mystical interpretations, of writers revelling in the new field opened up by their escape from the artificial quantities of the so-called classical period; the melodies are unique examples of the blending of scientific music with popular song.

The hymns of the Latin rite are differentiated from the other liturgical texts in that they possess Metre as well as Rhythm, the combination of which two features presents us with a particularly interesting subject of study. For the music and poetry of the hymns of the *Antiphonale Romanum* to be understood scientifically as well as appreciated æsthetically it is necessary to have some knowledge of Rhythm as well as of Metre. The two are not identical, though in loose speaking they are often confounded. "We in England have obscured the issue [*i.e.*, the distinction between the two] by confusing, or identifying, rhythm with metre; the system of accents or stresses with that of the number and duration of syllables."[1] "On confond souvent, mais à tort, le rhythme et la mesure, qui sont en réalité deux choses très-distinctes pouvant exister l'une sans l'autre."[2] It is unfortunate that writers on plainsong have often given their readers the impression that Metre is merely a species of Rhythm, and that rhythm may be divided into irregular or free rhythm and regular or metrical rhythm. This is not so; for, as the foregoing quotation from Sir William Hadow most clearly shows, rhythm deals with questions of intensity or dynamy rather than with questions of duration in time.

Rhythm may be defined as that grace or "well-ordered motion"[3] (Plato) which distinguishes good literature, whether it be prose or poetry, from a mere indiscriminate aggregation of words and sentences, grammatically correct though the latter may be. Rhythm has always been the glory of good language, more especially, perhaps, of the Latin tongue, where it is by no means confined to poetry, whether in rhymed or blank verse. The speeches of Cicero, the Bulls of the Popes, contain distinct evidence of a well-ordered scheme by which the accents or stresses are scientifically distributed, more especially at the cadences: and to the cadences of such prose-rhythms the name of *cursus* has been given. The cursus appears in four varieties:

A. *Cursus planus:*

Mere/-ámur in coélis.[4] /../.
for/éver and éver.

B. *Cursus tardus:*

Solemni/-táte laetíficas[4] /../..
Medi/-átor and Ádvocate.

C. *Cursus velox:*

/Saécula saeculórum. /..../.

D. *Cursus trispondiacus:*

A/-móre roborémur.[4] /.../.

---

[1] Sir W. H. Hadow, "Notes on Rhythm," in *The Music Student*, December, 1919, p. 121.

[2] Pothier, "Les Mélodies Grégoriennes," Tournay, 1881, p. 212.

[3] *Ars bene movendi.*

[4] These three examples are taken from "A Grammar of Plainchant," by the Benedictines of Stanbrook. London: Burns and Oates, 1905, pp. 70, 71.

The collects of the Latin missal are pre-eminent for the melodious rhythm of their cadences; and we find, further, that many of the antiphons are most skilfully balanced in their verbal structure.[1]

Between the two classes, prose and verse, into which we broadly divide liturgical language and music (plainsong cannot be studied in isolation from its musical text) lies, in fact, a limbo, the existence of which accentuates the claim of plainsong to be the true music of Nature, in that it has no hard, straight lines of division. There are found in the Latin office-books (1) certain types of prose antiphons which have a rhythmic scheme of almost mathematical regularity—*e.g.*:

(*a*) Salva nos, Domine, vigilantes,
custodi nos dormientes ;
ut vigilemus in Christo,
et requiescamus in pace.

(*b*) Tu es Petrus,
et super hanc petram
aedificabo
ecclesiam meam.

(2) Certain forms of unrhymed verse so free that they approximate to prose as nearly as to verse—*e.g.*, the hymn *Benedicta es tu* in the office for Maundy Thursday, the introit *Salve sancta parens* from Sedulius' *Carmen Paschale,* and similar texts, to which Dr. W. H. Frere would presumably add the Elegiac processions *Salve festa dies* and *Gloria laus et honor.*[2]

Rhythm, as before defined, is the scientific but not necessarily regular arrangement of the accents in speech. Accents fall, in Latin, on at least one out of every three syllables; in English, however, it is not at all infrequent to meet with only one accent in four, five, or even six syllables, a fact which seems to have escaped hitherto the notice of writers on plainsong. In theory their axiom that all rhythm is either binary or ternary seems unassailable, and it holds good in practice also for Latin; but in English practice we must modify the theory to fit the facts. A good example of a collection of four syllables with only one accent is to be found in those words so maltreated by the "Anglican" psalters, "céremonies" and "téstimonies," while an example of six may be seen in Psalm vii., verse 8, "ínnocency that is."

---

[1] See, for example, "Grammar of Plainchant," pp. 99, 107.

[2] "The processionals *Salve festa dies* and *Gloria laus et honor* are not, strictly speaking, hymns at all, though they may be roughly described as hymns with chorus" ("The Elements of Plainchant," p. 61. London: The Plainsong and Medieval Music Society, 1909).

Each group of syllables containing an accent is termed a "foot," though when considering the classical metres we must read "long" for "accent" in this definition. A collection of feet in a systematic plan is termed a "verse," the usual name for which in colloquial English is "line," which word we shall use throughout for the sake of clearness: "verse" in this popular category meaning the same thing as "stanza." The metres occurring in Latin hymnody are all founded either on the classical or pre-classical Latin verse systems; English hymn-metres, on the other hand, when not derived directly from the Latin, are usually founded on the Dance, March, or Ballad rhythms, the last of which probably took its rise from the movement of a galloping horse: compare the ballads of "Chevy Chase" and "John Gilpin." The Ballad rhythm (common metre, as it is known in our hymn-books) is not without its value in didactic hymns; experience has shown that it is the easiest metre to commit to memory. The March rhythm is decidedly useful for certain special types of hymn, and the Dance rhythm has been found an easy way of stirring superficial emotions.

The fewness of the metres used by the Latins makes for simplicity, and creates a kind of *ethos* of its own. The choice of metres provided in the hymnals in use in England is more liberal, but probably not ample enough. Books in rarer use, such as the "Songs of Syon" (London: Schott and Co., 1910), introduce us to many new and delightful rhythms and metres, and of the latter not the least charming are those with "feminine" (trochaic) endings. But an error of the opposite extreme is met with in the Huguenot metrical psalters; where are many purely artificial (and consequently inferior and sterile) metres, designed, it would seem, to provide by a system of permutations and combinations the greatest possible number of ways of arranging x accents in y syllables.

The Latin verse systems which concern us include the following "feet":

⏑ –	Iambus	./	– ⏑	Trochee	/.
– ⏑ ⏑	Dactyl	/..	– –	Spondee	/.′
– ⏑ ⏑ –	Asclepiad	/../			

In addition to which we shall occasionally refer to—

⏑ ⏑ –	Anapæst	../	– ⏑ –	Cretic	/..′
⏑ ⏑ ⏑	Tribrach	.′..	⏑ – ⏑	Amphibrach	./

For musical purposes the tribrach and cretic are practically the same as the dactyl, and the spondee is nearly identical with the trochee.

2. *THE RHYTHMIC SYSTEM.*

The ideas and problems presented by the Rhythmic system of the Latin hymns have been investigated with far less detail than the remainder of the textual matter of plainsong. These ideas and problems, though of considerable interest and some complexity, are not really abstruse, and have close bearing on the practice and execution of the hymn-melodies. To grasp them, the most satisfactory way will be to take a concrete example, in the form of a representative stanza:

. / . / . / . /
O salutaris hostia

. / . / . / . /
quae coeli pandis ostium,

. / . / . / . /
bella premunt hostilia;

. / . / / . /
da robur, fer auxilium.

We may notice two points about the scheme of accents marked over the text. First, that the accent placed over the final syllable of *hostia* and *hostilia* seems hardly justified. It is, as a matter of fact, practically non-existent in such cases; it is shown here in order to exemplify the scheme of the meter (the iambic dimeter). It exisits in theory, but not necessarily in practice; and where it is absent in practice the æsthetic gain is generally held to be very great.

The second and far more important thing is that the system of accents differs very much from the prosodic scansion which we learnt at school, and that the signs – and ᴗ, which belong customarily to the study of classical Latin verse, have been replaced by the signs / and ·, with ./ to denote a secondary or minor stress. The reason for this difference is that in the centuries (say 400 to 1300) in which these hymns were written the system of "longs" and "shorts" had been almost entirely superseded (*to the immense advantage of the language*) by a system of accent and non-accent. In other words, through the supersession of the quantitative system by the rhythmic, the Latin tongue came to be sung much more nearly in the same way as it was spoken.

In expressing a preference for the rhythmic system over the quantitative we are conscious of having the temerity (though *de gustibus non est disputandum*) to differ from no less an authority than Sir Henry Hadow, who delights in the "constant balance and oscillation between these two, a wide and flexible scheme of 'phrasing across the bar' in which the accent runs counter to the metrical foot."[1] But why is it not better to adhere to the rhythm of the words as actually pronounced (in the medieval times under consideration, if not in the so-called classical era also) than to follow a quantitative system which is suspected of being somewhat arbitrary in its rules, as well as alien in its origin?[2] It would seem that the only solid argument (as distinct from questions of taste, no less important in their own sphere) against the rhythmic system is that it tends to produce "jingle," a form abhorrent to the appropriate dignity of liturgical poetry. "Jingle" does exist in medieval religious poetry, without a doubt: *Hora novissima* and some of the later sequences are magnificent examples of this decadent form; but such poems are not, and have never been claimed to be, true representatives of the hymnology of the Western Church. To do so would be analogous to setting up "The Waters of Lodore" as a representative specimen of English poetry.

Three explanations of the abandonment of the quantitative system are advanced: that they are not mutually exclusive will be apparent, and is evidenced by the fact that Professor Peter Wagner refers, with no apparent consciousness of inconsistency, to the first two of these at different points in his "Introduction to the Gregorian Melodies."[1]

---

[1] "Notes on Rhythm," in *The Music Student*, December, 1919, p. 121.

[2] See quotation from Père Dechevrens at the foot of the next page.

To the explanation which we shall consider first we yield precedence, not because it is necessarily the most important, but because it bears a closer relation to what we have just said about the natural qualities of rhythm. It is held that the change from quantitative metre to stress rhythm is due to the influence upon the Ambrosian hymn-writers of the popular Saturnine poetry of their day. This influence is an undisputed fact—the first hymnologists undoubtedly cultivated the "popular" type of verse, and that with deliberate intent—but it is not sufficiently recognized as a development rather than a debasement. The influence of popular poetry upon liturgical song *may* have been deleterious, but this is by no means necessary. The popular influence working upon the compilation of "Hymns Ancient and Modern" was not all to the bad, though mawkish sentimentalities are found in that book; the "folksong" influence upon "The English Hymnal" was on the whole good, though abominations such as the adaptation of "Rendell my Son" to "The Story of the Cross" spoil its pages. So also the Ambrosian hymns, in adopting the Saturnine verse (itself a very old form, only ousted in the "classical" period by Hellenic metres, and in this respect similar to the recently revived folksongs in English hymnody), were not necessarily decadent, but, if anything, improvements on the current metres, being indigenous in their origin[2] and more true to Nature. Cicero (*Oratio* LV.) himself refers to the different character borne by poetry designed for singing in his own day.[3]

---

[1] English Translation. The Plainsong and Medieval Music Society, N.D.

[2] "Cette poésie existait déjà et, probablement, avait toujours existé dans la langue latine ; non pas, sans doute, dans la langue des lettrés, férus de grécisme, mais dans la vieille langue du Latium restée populaire" ("Composition musicale et Composition littéraire," Anton Dechevrens, S.J., vol. i., p. 62. Paris : Picard, 1910). "La poésie populaire avait existé à Rome de tous temps et ne cessa pas d'exister, même pendant les époques les plus brillantes de la littérature romaine. . . . Toutes les tentatives qu'on a faites pour expliquer d'après les règles de la quantité la formation du *vers saturnien,* le mètre national des Romains, ont invariablement échoué" ("Metrique naturelle du langage," P. Pierson, Bibl. de l'École des Hautes Études, fasc. 56, part ii., chap. vi. Paris, 1882).

[3] Pothier, "Les Mélodies Grégoriennes," p. 217. Tournay, 1881.

A second explanation is to trace the change back through Hilary of Poictiers to Ephrem Syrus, and thence to Semitic origins. This seems a somewhat unnecessary process if the foregoing is itself true: still, the two explanations, as we have said, are not mutually exclusive.

A third cause, which again is not incompatible with the other two, has hitherto escaped notice, so far as we have been able to trace. Latin hymnology of the earliest periods introduced for the first time the custom of singing stanzas or strophes ("verses" in colloquial English) to fixed recurring melodies. This was practically an innovation, for early Christian hymns written in Greek rarely had more than one or two stanzas—if, indeed, the stanza-form is evident at all in the few remaining examples. This must have created a natural demand for the change, for in most of the classical metres the number of syllables may vary: amphibrach may replace trochee, dactyl may become spondee, and so on. To sing a number of stanzas, the corresponding lines of which might contain a varying number of syllables in different verses, to a fixed recurring melody is impossible without continual adaptations and "footnotes"; the system, if ever tried, must have been found unmanageable, and a modification of practice is therefore to be expected. To this fact, quite as much as to the individual development of poets working under Byzantine or Oriental influences, the change should probably be ascribed.

CHAPTER II.

I. *THE METRES OF THE BREVIARY.*

By far the most usual metre in the office hymns of the Breviary is that which we have quoted, the Iambic Dimeter. This was derived from the old Saturnine poetry (see above, p. 7), and is known in English hymnology as Long Metre. Of its four accents in each line, the third is the most important, followed by the first, second, and fourth in that order. Indeed, the fourth accent, as we have seen (*hóstia, hostília*) often disappears altogether. Rhythmic licence—*i.e.*, the anticipation or retardation of an accent on the syllable before or after that on which it should normally fall—is fairly frequent, and is found from the very earliest times; an extreme example is this, from *Veni Redemptor gentium,* by St. Ambrose:

tális décet pártus Déum.

In this case the normal rhythmic structure of the iambic dimeter is entirely reversed, the poet replacing every one of the four iambi by a trochee. Similarly, in our example *O salutaris hostia,* on page 5, are other instances; *bella, e.g.*, is rhythmically a trochee, not an iambus, and similar instances can be found all through the hymns of this class, especially in the first foot of the line.

The strict regularity of periodic rhythm, which was a marked feature of most of the secular medieval compositions, as well as of all modern music till a comparatively recent period, was objected to by the Church as being unnecessarily secular in its flavour. Furthermore, poets in all lands and times take advantage of rhythmic licence when they think fit.

Our next example in order of frequency, though it is ranked first in point of merit by many critics, is the Sapphic metre. The medieval or rhythmic metre of the Sapphic varies considerably from the classical or quantitative form. Rhythmic licence is, by comparison with the iambic dimeter, rare; the stanza chosen for illustration contains no case of an anticipated or deferred accent, being rhythmically perfect, with the exception of additional and secondary accents on *pie* and *die*:

Íste conféssor Dóminí, coléntes

quém píe láudant pópulí per órbem,

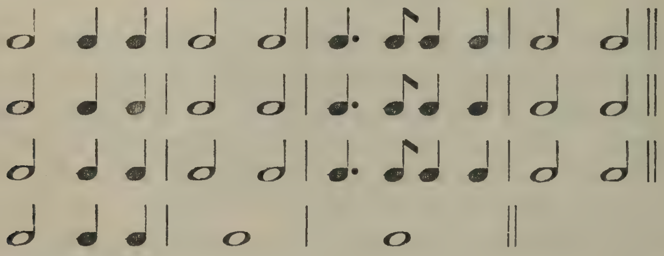
hác díe laétus méruit beátas

scándere sédes.

The classical Sapphic is scanned thus:

– ˘ – ˘ – ⌇ ˘ ˘ – ˘ – –
– ˘ – ˘ – ⌇ ˘ ˘ – ˘ – –
– ˘ – ˘ – ⌇ ˘ ˘ – ˘ – –
– ˘ – ˘ –

How marked were the medieval stresses which replaced the classical "longs" may be noticed by a reference to the numerous late medieval times from the French *paroissiens*. Several of these are given in "The English Hymnal," Nos. 165, 188, 191, 208, 242, 335, and 435. Their metrical scheme is as follows:



The Sapphics have a peculiar charm of their own, a lilt which never deteriorates into a jingle, and are among the finest treasures of the Hymnarium. Where revived in English hymn-books they are steadily gaining ground in popularity.

The metre usually spoken of as Choriambic[1] presents us with a peculiarly interesting problem of its own. Dr. W. H. Frere[2] says: "In the Choriambic hymns the metre is even more definitely disregarded, and for musical purposes they might almost be reckoned as Iambic. Quantity is superseded by accent, as, *e.g.*,

"*Sānctō / rūm mĕrĭtīs / īnclĭtă gaū / dĭă*

"is treated as if it were

"*Sanctó / rum mé / ritís / inclíta gaú | diá.*"

In this conclusion the learned doctor differs from the German chorale-writer C. Peter (1674)—*vide* "The English Hymnal," No. 182, modern tune, from Dom Pothier,[3] and from the metrical interpretation of the choriambic form given by Anton Dechevrens,[4] but agrees with the English translators of the nineteenth century, led by their master, Dr. J. M. Neale. But the quantitative accuracy of the earliest hymn in this metre (*Sanctorum meritis*) in the second half of each of the first three lines[5] has led to the suggestion that they were wrong. It will be necessary to investigate this point in detail in order accurately to interpret the melodies, and the subjoined table enumerates the position of the accents in the majority of the Breviary hymns of this metre. The table was intended to be exhaustive, but a comprehensive metrical index to the leading Breviaries does not seem to be available. The examples are arranged, as far as can be ascertained or estimated, in chronological order, and the figures for the opening foot of each half of the first three lines are also given.

---

[1] Wagner (*op. cit.*, p. 142) describes it as being "composed of asclepiads and glyconics," a definition more scientific, but less usual.

[2] "Hymn Melodies and Sequences," Introduction, p. vii. London: The Plainsong and Medieval Society, 1903.

[3] "Les Mélodies Grégoriennes," p. 221.

[4] "Composition Musicale," vol. i., p. 87, No. 27.

[5] The Vatican Antiphonale, 1912, *prints* the accents *ínclyta gaudia*, not *inclíta gaudia*, as given by Dr. Frere.

Hymn.	*Former Half of Line.*		*Latter Half of Line.*	
	Trochaic Opening.	Iambic Opening.	Trochaic Opening.	Iambic Opening.
Sanctorum meritis	4	14	16	2
Sacris solemniis	9	12	13	8
Quaenam lingua tibi	8	4	8+1 ?	3+1 ?
Jam toto subitus	10	8	10+1 ?	7+1 ?
Te Joseph celebrent	2	13	13	2
Custodes hominum	5	7	8+2 ?	2+2 ?
Martinae celebri, *and* Tu natale solum	12	18	23	7
Festivis resonent	5	16	15	6
Maerentes oculi	3	18	15	6
Total (dividing doubtful cases evenly)	58	110	123	45

The figures of eleven hymns from the Bayeux and Roman Breviaries of 1851, probably influenced by classic revival, and not genuinely representative of medieval practice, are as follows:

143 58 128 73

This examination forces us to the conclusion that while the English translators have been justified when preferring to open the first half of their lines in iambic rhythm, they have been (though not entirely unsupported by *occasional* Latin practice) wrong in *invariably* opening the second half, after the *caesura* in the same way. Certainly we think that Dr. Frere's statement referred to above (p. 3) should read "less definitely" for "even more definitely." The true rhythm of the choriambic metre thus becomes—

·/·/·/ 𝄽 /··/·/
·/·/·/ 𝄽 /··/·/
·/·/·/ 𝄽 /··/·/
·/·/·/·/

The distinction in this verdict between the first and second halves of the line is supported by the analogy of the *metre*, which opens with a spondee, as an alternative to a trochee, in the first case, but with a dactyl in the second. A "long" vowel was therefore customarily allowed on the second syllable, though not on the eighth.

Sundry other metres are found in the Breviary, but none of them call for special mention; they are of comparatively rare occurrence. They are as follows:

6 6 6 6	Trochaic.	*Ex. Ave maris stella.*
7 7 7 7	Iambic.	*Cultor dei, memento.*
8 7 8 7 8 7	Trochaic.	*Pange lingua, gloriosi.*
11 11 11 11	Asclepiad.	*O quam glorifica luce coruscas.*
12 12 12 12	Dactylic-iambic.	*Annue Christe, saeculorum Domine.*

2. *SEQUENCES AND ELEGIACS.*

Turning from the Breviary to the Missal, we find this salient difference, that while the metres we have been considering are nearly all iambic in rhythm, the Sequences, on the other hand, are trochaic, and the Processions elegiac (dactyl and spondee formation). The normal scheme of the Sequence is that of the *Stabat Mater:*

/ / / /
Stabat mater dolorosa
/ / / /
juxta crucem lacrymosa
/ / / /
dum pendebat filius
/ / / /
cujus animam gementem
/ / / /
contristatum et dolentem
/ / / /
pertransivit gladius.

In this stanza, which is a not unfair representative of the Sequences as a whole, the stress is perfectly regular; the hymn consists of ten stanzas of six lines, and in the whole two hundred and forty accents only four are anticipated (*in tanto supplicio; ut sibi complaceam; in planctu desidero; et plagas recolere*) and two deferred (*dolentem cum Filio; ardeat cor meum*). In the whole of the *Lauda Syon*, out of 316 accents, none are deferred and only five anticipated (*in hymnis et canticis; in sui memoriam; et vinum in sanguinem; signati minuitur; nec*

/ . . / . /
sumptus consumitur). These facts are in striking contrast to the rhythmic licence which we found in the iambic dimeter and choriambic of the Breviary, and show that the later writers (the Sequences are on a rough average 400 years later than the Office hymns) had a keener and firmer sense of rhythmic regularity, possibly under the influence of the new art of mensurate music which was growing up in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries.

In the change from quantity-metre to stress-rhythm, however, there was one metre which did not share—namely, the elegiac. This is a couplet of dactylic hexameter and pentameter. The dactylic hexameter alone (heroic) is not found to any appreciable extent in Latin hymnody, and in no "official" liturgical hymns or sequences, saving only the *Alma chorus Domini* of the Sarum books. In the Latin rite it is represented only by certain antiphons of Sedulius and others, for which see below, p. 25 *ff*.

The reason why the elegiac couplet did not undergo this change is probably because to supplant a quantitative dactyl by a dactyl in the arsis and thesis sense (semeiologically, to change – ◡ ◡ to /..) is to produce a result which feels cumbrous and inelegant. It is noteworthy that in English poetry, which takes no regard of quantity, but only of stress, an effort was made by Surrey and his group of Elizabethan poets to acclimatize the elegiac, and that the litterateurs in question came to the settled conclusion that the metre was unsuited to the genius of the English tongue. English, unlike Latin, is governed by its consonants rather than by its vowels. Efforts to adapt the elegiac to English since the Elizabethan period have been spasmodic, and successful only in isolated cases, not in any wide sense. "Both [hexameter and pentameter] are more suited to the Latin than to the English language, in spite of Longfellow's wonderful mastery of the dactylic form in his 'Evangeline' and 'Courtship of Miles Standish.'"[1] We are thus led to the inference that the elegiac is not manageable in a scheme of poetry dependent upon stress instead of quantity, and that it is unsuitable for poetry of this kind which has to be sung to the recurring melodies of the hymnal.

Some explanation is certainly needed for the reluctance of the earlier medieval hymn-writers to write in elegiacs. The first and leading examples in official Christian hymnology of the elegiac couplet were the great processions extracted from the *Annus florigerus* of Venantius Fortunatus (530-609), written in quantitative metre. The popularity of *Salve festa dies* for the great feasts abides to this day (it is noteworthy, in support of the contention above, that the most popular translation of the Salves used in England is iambic, not dactylic), and was manifested in the later Middle Ages by a large number of imitations for the festivals not covered by the *Annus florigerus;* these were of varying merit, but were more or less slavish followings of Venantius.

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[1] "Plainsong," Rev. Thomas Helmore, p. 83 footnote. London: Novello, n.d.

The same poet provided one of the few other elegiacs found in the hymnals, *Crux benedicta nitet. Gloria laus et honor*, the procession for Palm Sunday, is the best known of this class: it is popularized in England, we note again, in *iambic* form. Another example is *Virgo dei genitrix*, associated with the nuns of Barking.

3. *MENSURAL THEORIES.*

The nature of this distinction between quantity and rhythmic accent throws an interesting light upon the development of English musical ideas in the Middle Ages. When we turn to the few examples of experimental or practical harmony dating before the reign of Henry VI., we find that the examples of elegiac or hexametric verse in the Liturgy, scarce as they are (the above-mentioned processions and some of the Kyrie-tropes), have been frequently chosen by the early mensuralists as themes for contrapuntal treatment.

These specimens are of great value, as they enable us to refute a suggestion made by Combarieu[1] that verse of the metrical, as distinct from the rhythmic, sort was actually sung in measured time. His quotations from Gerbert's "Scriptores" are most interesting, and two of the more pertinent are given below, the English translation following Combarieu's rather free French translation in its interpretation of certain terms. The validity of his conclusions is then examined in the light of the examples which we subjoin.

---

[1] "Histoire de la Musique," vol. i., p. 275. Paris, 1913.

(1) Qui scintillam vel perpaucam habet metrorum, hic cognoscere valet nostrum de hac re sermonem. Etenim metrum est ratio cum modulatione ; rythmus vero est modulatio sine ratione, et per syllabarum discernitur numerum.	Anyone who has a glimmering or smattering of knowledge about metres will understand what I say on this point. For metre is melody in mathematical measure ; while rhythm is melody without mathematical measure, determined by the number of the syllables.

(Aurelian of Réomé, ninth century : Gerbert, " Scriptores," i. 23.)

(2) Hoc interest inter rhythmus et metrum, quod rhythmus est sola verborum consonantia, sine ullo certo numero et fine, et in infinitum funditur nulla lege constrictus, nullis certis pedibus compositis ; metrum autem pedibus propriis certisque finibus ordinatur.	The difference between rhythm and metre is that rhythm is merely a harmonious flow of words, without mathematical system, undefined, not bound by any law, nor composed of definite feet ; while metre proceeds by definite and determinate feet.

(Remigius of Auxerre, ninth century : Gerbert, i., 68.)

By following these extracts blindly we are tempted to arrive at the extreme conclusion that hexametric hymns such as the *Salve festa dies* are not plainsong at all, but an early form of the *cantilena* or religious song in measured time. Such *cantilenæ* are known from very early times; they are non-liturgical and closely allied to the Crusader and Troubadour songs.

But, as Dom Gatard points out (" Plainchant," p. 44), it is necessary to walk with great caution when studying medieval music in the treatises of the theoretical writers. Let us turn from theory to practice, and see how the early harmonized examples alluded to will resolve the question. Practically none of these attempts being accessible in print, we reproduce two. Our first example is from a St. Neots Processionale in the British Museum (MS. Harley 2,942) marked " De la chapelle Thomas fitz au Roy, Duc de Glouc^{r} [*ob.* 1397] acheté de St. Henry Wynchestre," written[1] in the fifteenth century. The tenor, which is wanting in the MS., is the ordinary melody of the *Salve festa dies*, but the MS. gives us two voices only, above and below the melody ; to these the chorus of the Easter Salve is set.

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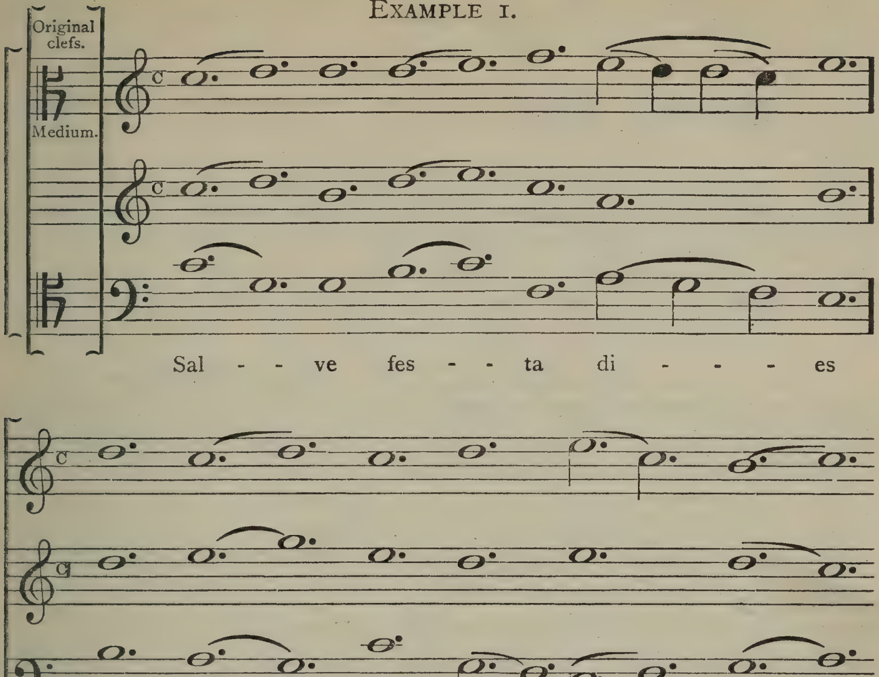
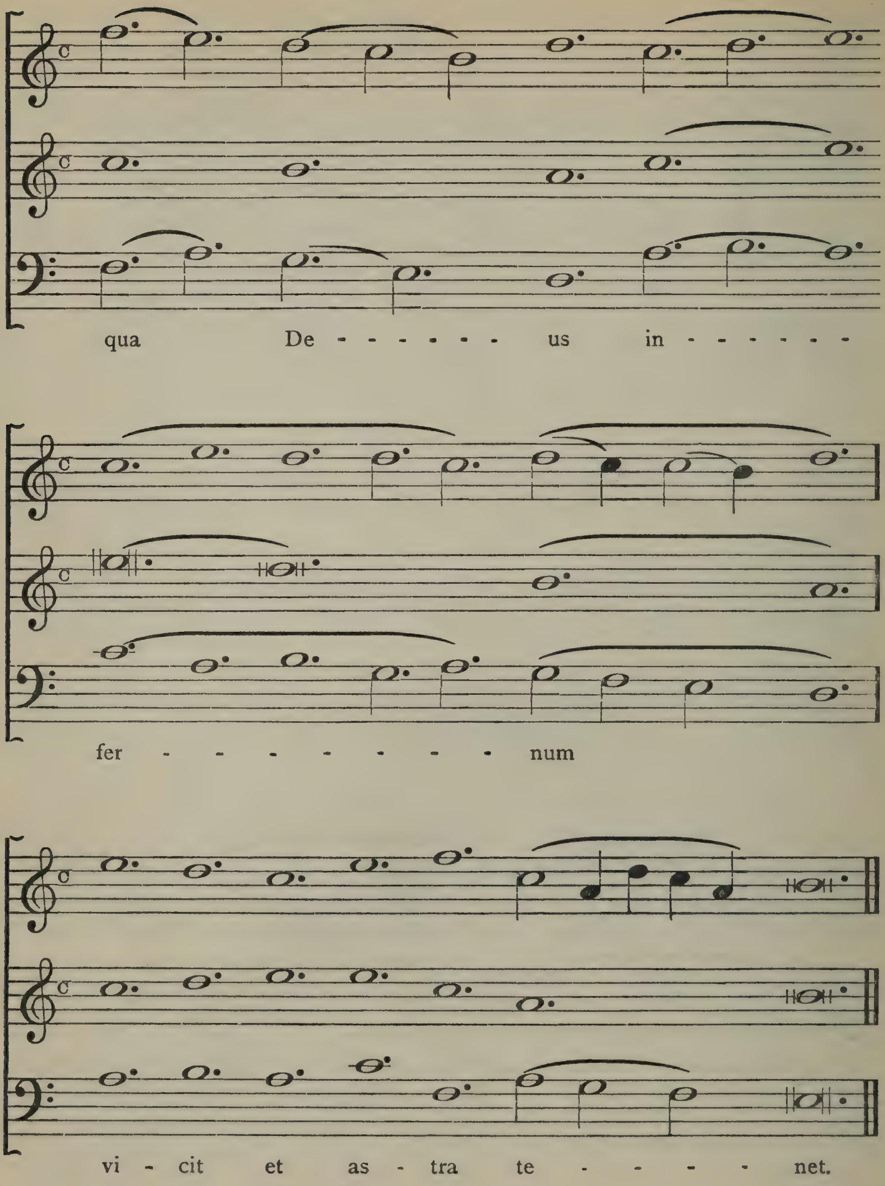
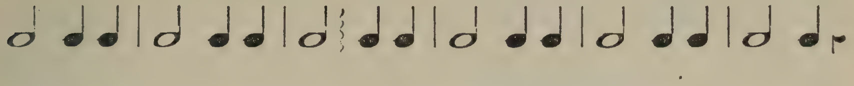
[1] A. Hughes-Hughes, Catalogue of MS. Music in the British Museum, vol. i., p. 256. London, 1906.

EXAMPLE I.


Original clefs.
Medium.
Sal - - ve fes - - ta di - - - - es
to - to ve - ne - - ra - - - - bi - - -
lis ae - - - - - vo:


qua De - - - - - - - us in - - - - - -
fer - - - - - - - num
vi - cit et as - tra te - - - - net.

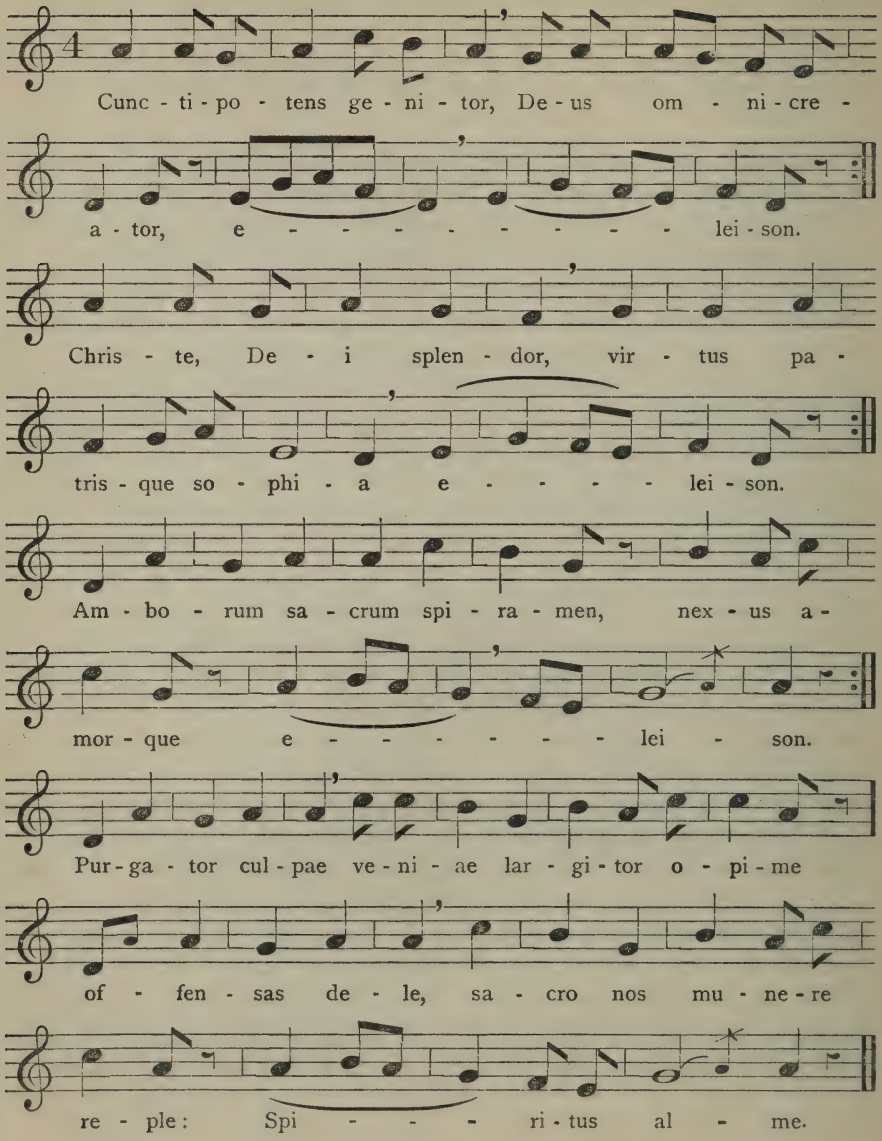
Are the hexametric texts plainsong, or are they mensurate? If the latter, we should expect them to conform to the following scheme:



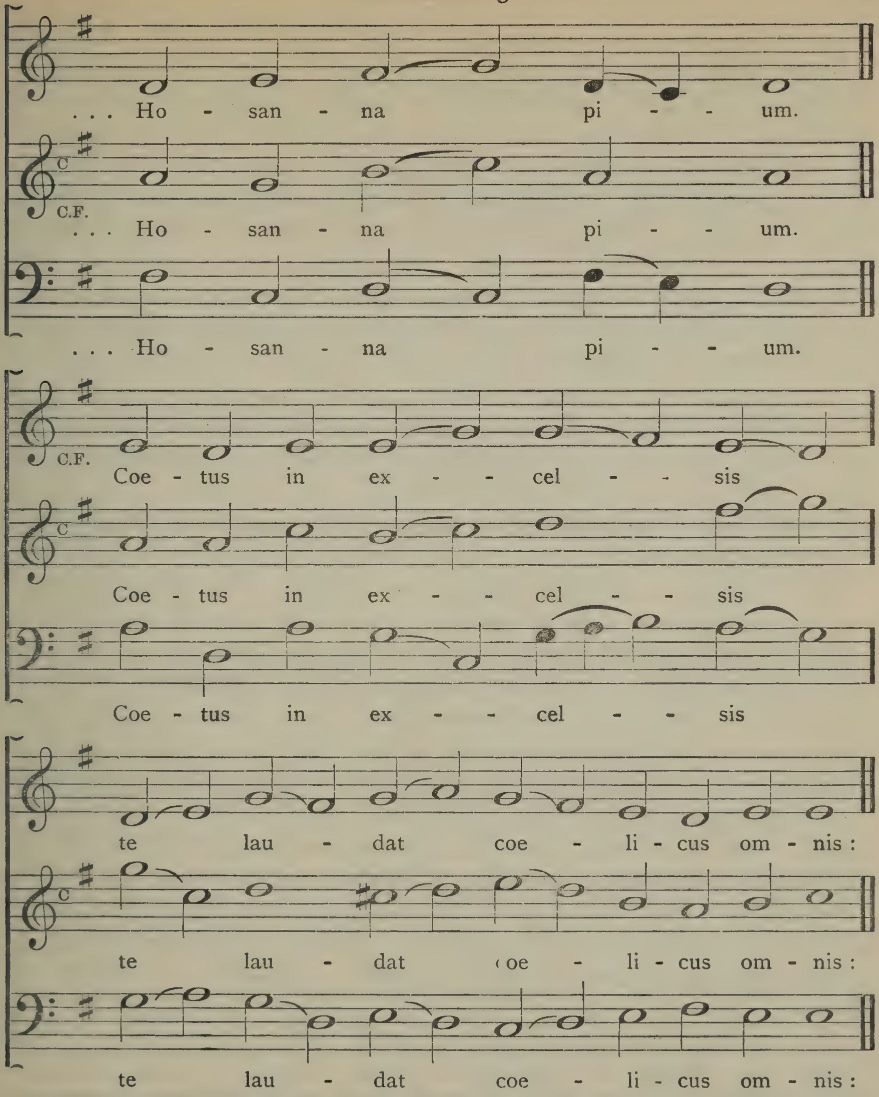
which is the form actually laid down by Dechevrens (*op. cit.*, vol. ii., p. 62) for *Kyrie cunctipotens.* But the example given above conforms to no such scheme: what it does roughly conform to is the principle of plainsong that all notes (having due regard to the relative value of syllables) are of equal duration. Where our example departs from plainsong is in its non-observance of the provision in the parenthesis, which the invention of harmony soon violated and ultimately destroyed in its own sphere. We notice also that the strophici in the pentameter are taken as equivalent to twice the length of the virgæ and puncta. The origin and *raison d'être* of these particular strophici are discussed by the late Mr. W. J. Birkbeck in the preface to "The English Hymnal" (Oxford University Press, 1906, pp. xxiii and xxiv).

Père Dechevrens chooses *Kyrie cunctipotens* as his instance of a metrical text (see Example 2). This is fortunate for us, as we are able to examine a harmonized version of this Kyrie-melody in a scientific form of the fourteenth century. Guillaume de Machault wrote in 1364 a Mass in four voices for the coronation of Charles V. of France, which survives in two MSS. of the Bibliothèque at Paris, *Fonds français* 22,546 and 1,585; fragments of the Mass are (or were) also to be found in Brussels, MS. 1,809. In this setting we find that there is no resemblance whatever to the metrical form of the hexameter; the notes were presumably in a plainsong or "equal-value" form at the time when the composer drew upon them for his counterpoint. The fact remains, however, that the early experimenters in harmony were remarkably fond of using hexametric texts for their *canti fermi.* In the MS. 1,236 of the Pepysian Library at Magdalene College, Cambridge, are no less than seven settings of *Salve festa dies* for various feasts, arranged for three and four voices. In the valuable collection of musical fragments recovered from the bindings of MSS. in Worcester Cathedral

EXAMPLE 2.


Cunc - ti - po - tens ge - ni - tor, De - us om - ni - cre -
a - tor, e - - - - - - - - lei - son.
Chris - te, De - i splen - dor, vir - tus pa -
tris - que so - phi - a e - - - - - lei - son.
Am - bo - rum sa - crum spi - ra - men, nex - us a -
mor - que e - - - - - - lei - son.
Pur - ga - tor cul - pae ve - ni - ae lar - gi - tor o - pi - me
of - fen - sas de - le, sa - cro nos mu - ne - re
re - ple: Spi - - - ri - tus al - me.

EXAMPLE 3.


. . . Ho - san - na pi - - um.
C.F.
. . . Ho - san - na pi - - um.
. . . Ho - san - na pi - - um.
C.F.
Coe - tus in ex - - cel - - sis
Coe - tus in ex - - cel - - sis
Coe - tus in ex - - cel - - sis
te lau - dat coe - li - cus om - nis :
te lau - dat coe - li - cus om - nis :
te lau - dat coe - li - cus om - nis :

From the Conductus setting in the MS. at Worcester Cathedral, Fragment XIX., fol. 2v., thirteenth century. This is the longest connected extract possible, the MS. being in a very fragmentary condition. The *canto fermo* follows an "equal-note" scheme throughout. A different setting is provided for each verse of the hymn, but one only for the chorus.

Library[1] are the remains of two full settings of *Gloria laus et honor* (for one of these see Example 3) and *Virgo dei genitrix* as a two-part conductus. The melody of *Kyrie cunctipotens*, referred to above, is treated polyphonically in many places: see "Early English Harmony" (The Plainsong and Medieval Music Society), vol. i., 1897, Plate XXX; vol. ii., 1912, p. 53; Fr. Ludwig, "Repertorium Organorum," vol. i., fasc. i., p. 329; "The Oxford History of Music" (Clarendon Press), 1901, vol. i., p. 86; vol. ii., p. 68. Presumably the old composers felt that poetry which followed the old "classical" system was more susceptible of treatment in two or more voices than the Saturnine and other rhythmic verses; and for this reason, that the species of rhythm attached to the quantitative system was *more fixed* than the stress-rhythm of the medieval centuries. For in the former there was *no place for the anticipated or deferred accent;* the dactyl might be replaced by the spondee, but never by the amphibrach (◡ – ◡), anapaest (◡ ◡ –), or other trisyllabic form; the trochee might sometimes replace the spondee, but the iambus never.

We referred to Dr. Frere on p. 3 as implying that the *Salve festa dies* and *Gloria laus et honor* stand in a class between prose and poetry; but our conclusion, supported (we think) by our evidence, is that they stand rather between the poetry of the ordinary plainsong hymn and the cantilena in fixed, or quasi-fixed, time. The melodies of the elegiac hymns do in fact lend themselves to the suggestion, implied by the theorists, but not borne out by the evidence of the early harmonists, that they were sung in strict duple time: one beat to a quantitative "short," two to a "long," four to a bar of one foot. For whereas the tendency in Gregorian hymnody of the more melismatic sort is for the "ornaments" or neums of two or more notes to occur on unaccented syllables, the analysis of the subjoined examples (Examples 4 and 5) shows that the ornaments are distributed in opposite proportion, as follows:

A. *Hexameters.*—Neums of two notes: upon "longs" 11, upon "shorts" 4. Neums of three notes: upon "longs" 4, upon "shorts" none.

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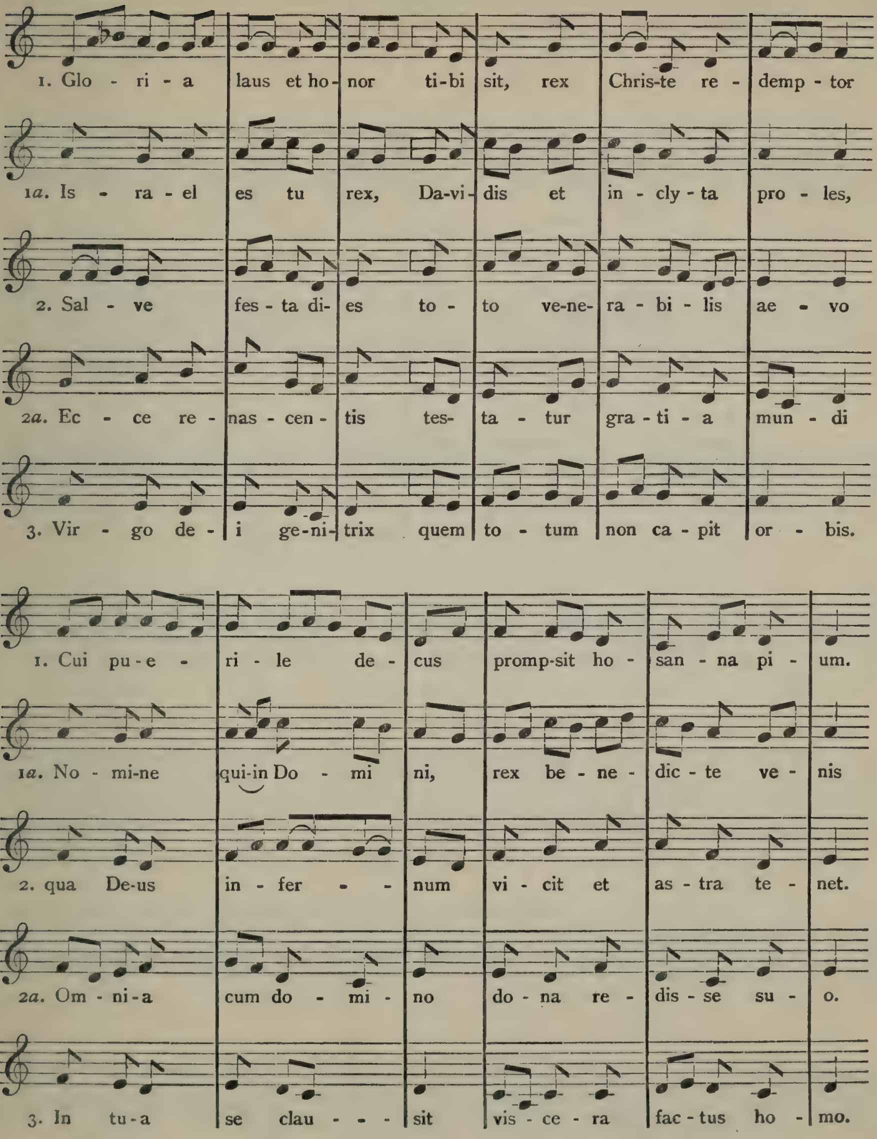
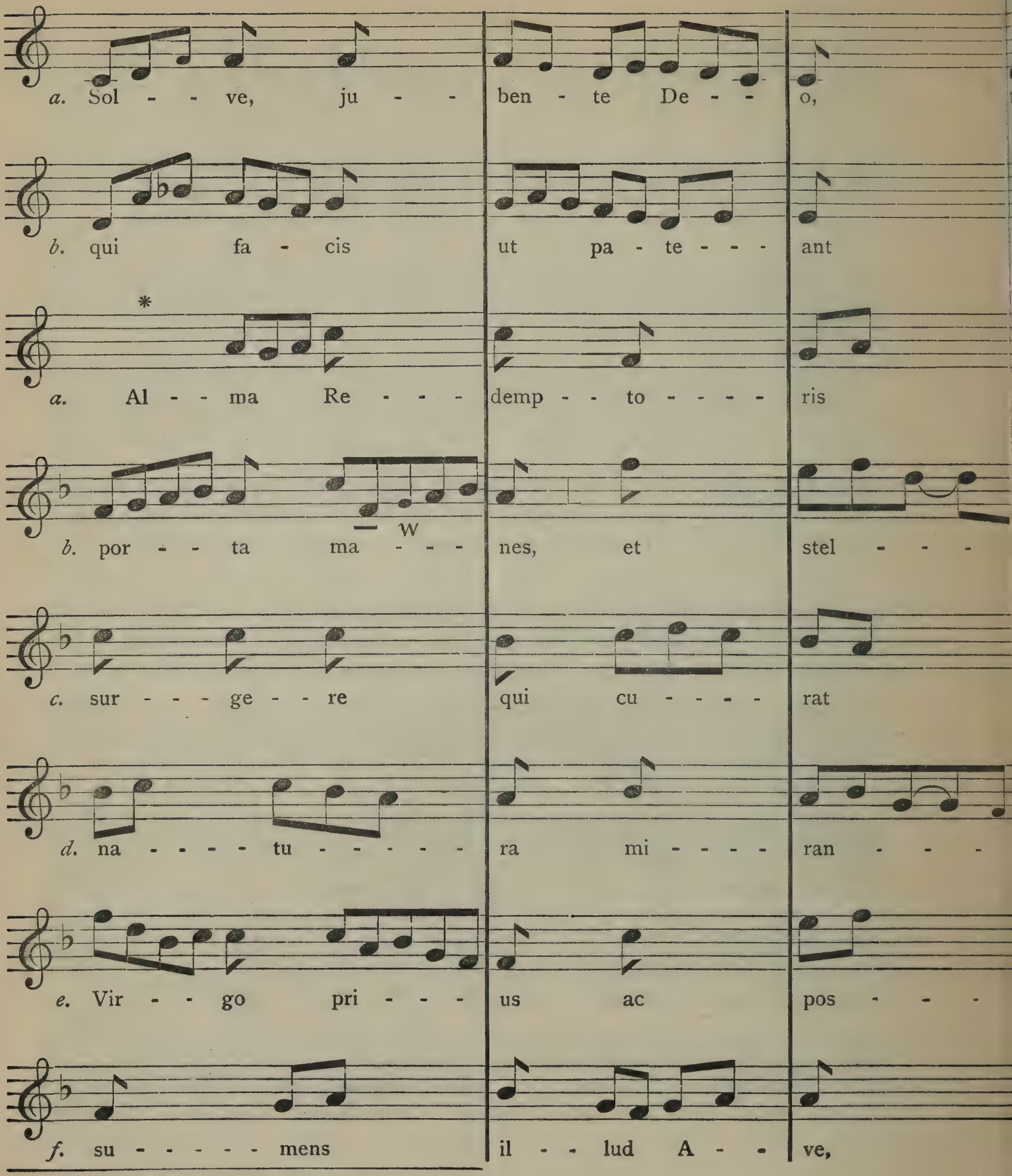
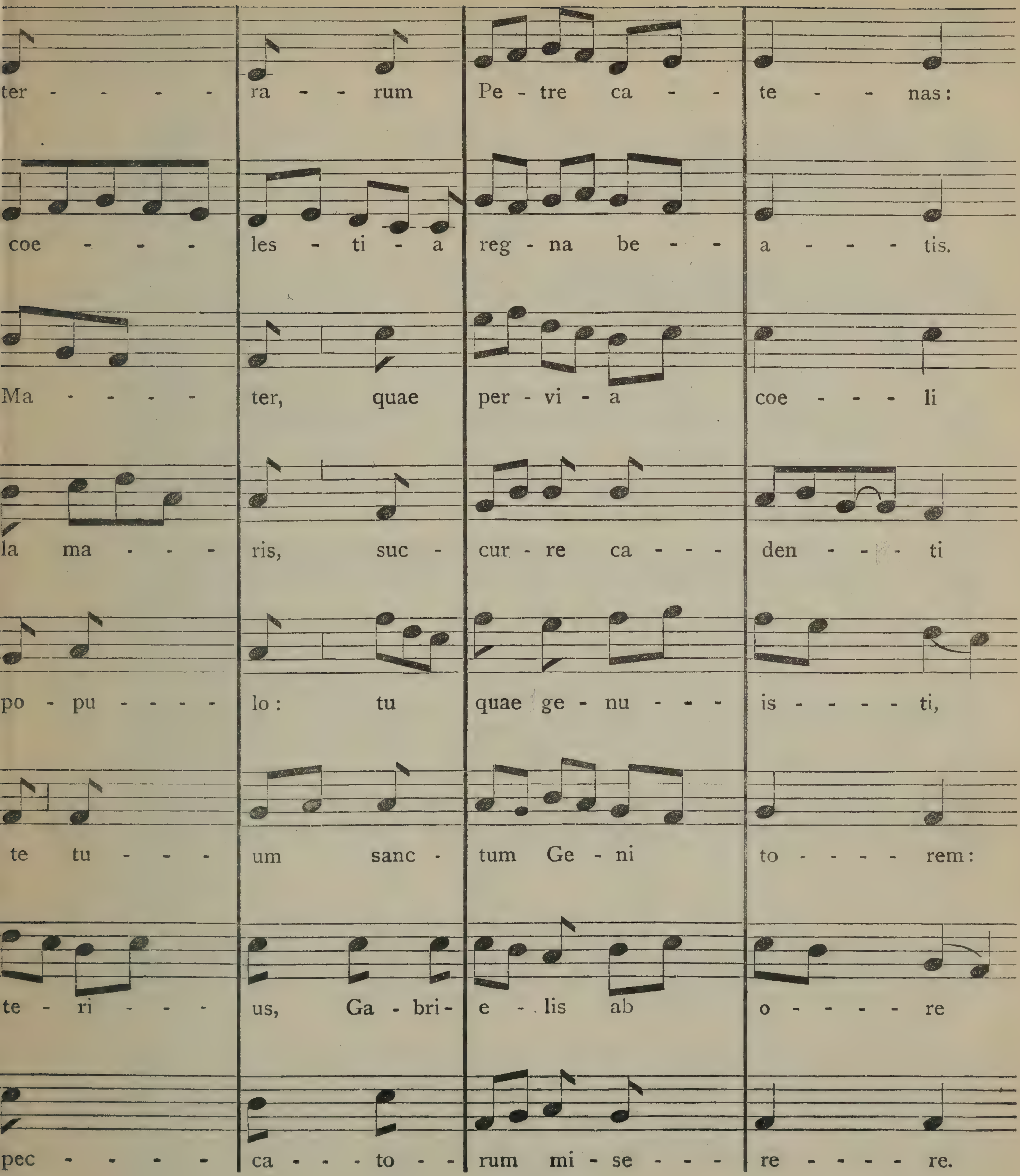
[1] See for a full description *The Cathedral Quarterly*, March, 1916, vol. iii., No. 12, pp. 13, *sqq*. (The Faith Press.)

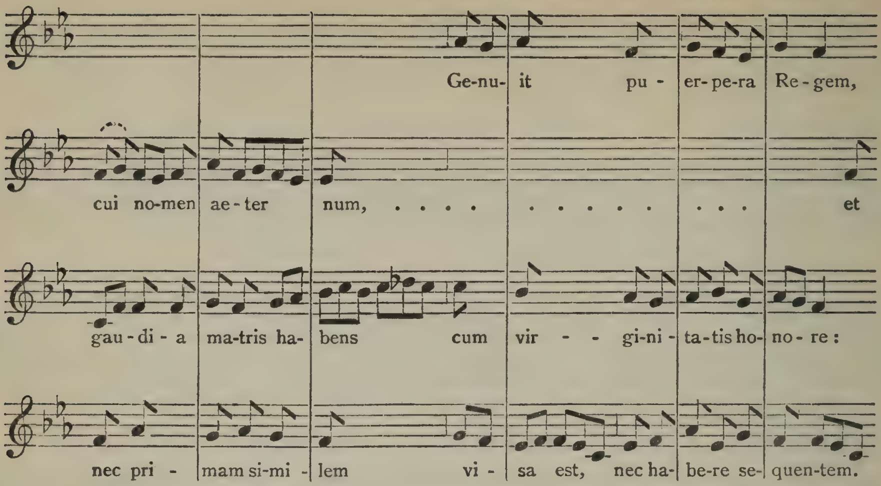
EXAMPLE 4.


1. Glo - ri - a laus et ho- nor ti-bi sit, rex Chris-te re - demp - tor
1a. Is - ra - el es tu rex, Da-vi- dis et in - cly - ta pro - les,
2. Sal - ve fes - ta di- es to - to ve-ne- ra - bi - lis ae - vo
2a. Ec - ce re - nas - cen - tis tes- ta - tur gra - ti - a mun - di
3. Vir - go de - i ge-ni- trix quem to - tum non ca - pit or - bis.
1. Cui pu - e - ri - le de - cus promp-sit ho - san - na pi - um.
1a. No - mi-ne qui-in Do - mi ni, rex be - ne - dic - te ve - nis
2. qua De-us in - fer - - num vi - cit et as - tra te - net.
2a. Om - ni-a cum do - mi - no do - na re - dis - se su - o.
3. In tu-a se clau - - - sit vis - ce - ra fac - tus ho - mo.

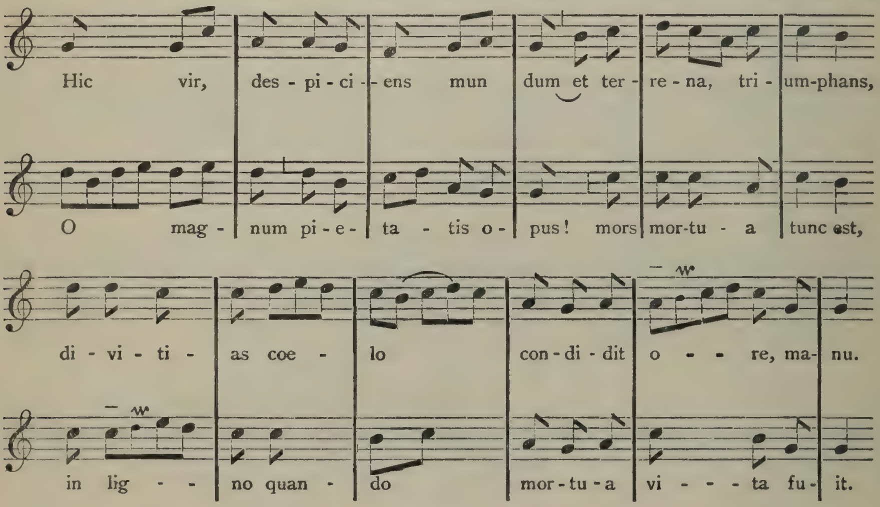

a. Sol - - ve, ju - - ben - te De - - o,
b. qui fa - cis ut pa - te - - - ant
*
a. Al - - ma Re - - - demp - - to - - - - ris
b. por - - ta ma - - - nes, et stel - - -
W
c. sur - - - ge - - re qui cu - - - - rat
d. na - - - - tu - - - - - ra mi - - - - ran - - -
e. Vir - - go pri - - - us ac pos - - -
f. su - - - - - mens il - - lud A - - ve,

* Neum of 16 notes.


ter - - - - - ra - - rum Pe - tre ca - - te - - nas:
coe - - - - les - ti - a reg - na be - - a - - - - tis.
Ma - - - - ter, quae per - vi - a coe - - - - li
la ma - - - ris, suc - cur - re ca - - - den - - - ti
po - pu - - - - lo: tu quae ge - nu - - - is - - - - ti,
te tu - - - um sanc - tum Ge - ni to - - - - rem:
te - ri - - - us, Ga - bri - e - lis ab o - - - - re
pec - - - - ca - - - to - - rum mi - se - - - re - - - - re.


Ge-nu- it pu - er-pe-ra Re-gem,
cui no-men ae-ter num, ... et
gau-di-a ma-tris ha- bens cum vir - - gi-ni - ta-tis ho- no-re:
nec pri - mam si-mi - lem vi - sa est, nec ha- be-re se- quen-tem.

Hexameters and pentameters.


Hic vir, des-pi-ci- -ens mun dum et ter- re-na, tri- um-phans,
O mag- num pi-e- ta - tis o- pus! mors mor-tu - a tunc est,
di - vi - ti - as coe - lo con-di-dit o - - re, ma- nu.
in lig - - no quan - do mor-tu-a vi - - - ta fu- it.

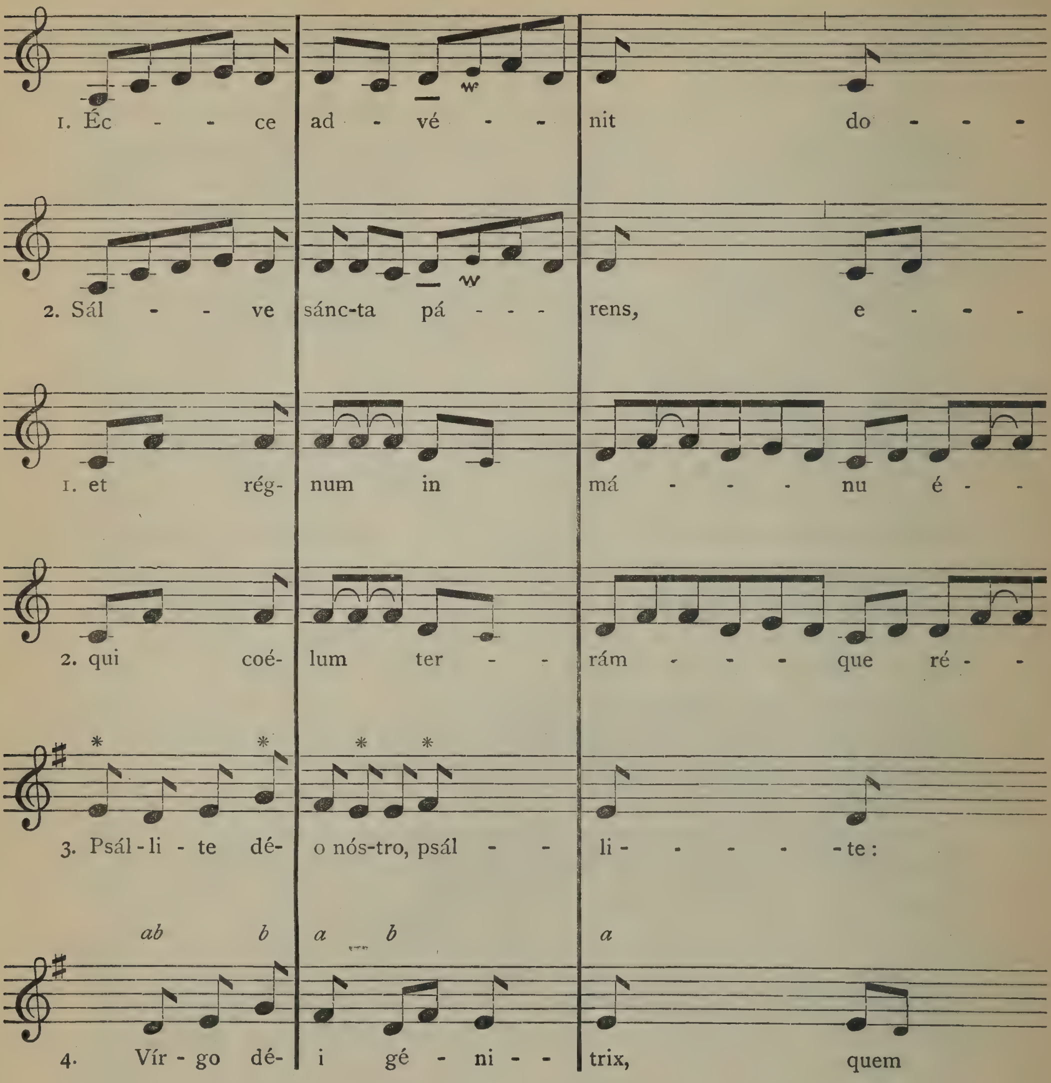
B. *Pentameters.*—Neums of two notes: upon "longs" 12, upon "shorts" 6. Neums of three or four notes: upon "longs" none, upon "shorts" 3. Total: upon "longs" 27 out of 55 available syllables (final syllables are excluded from the calculation as unrepresentative); upon "shorts" 13 only, out of 70 syllables available. The proportion, instead of being lower for the accented syllables, as in the case of the iambic and other hymns, is actually nearly three times as great.

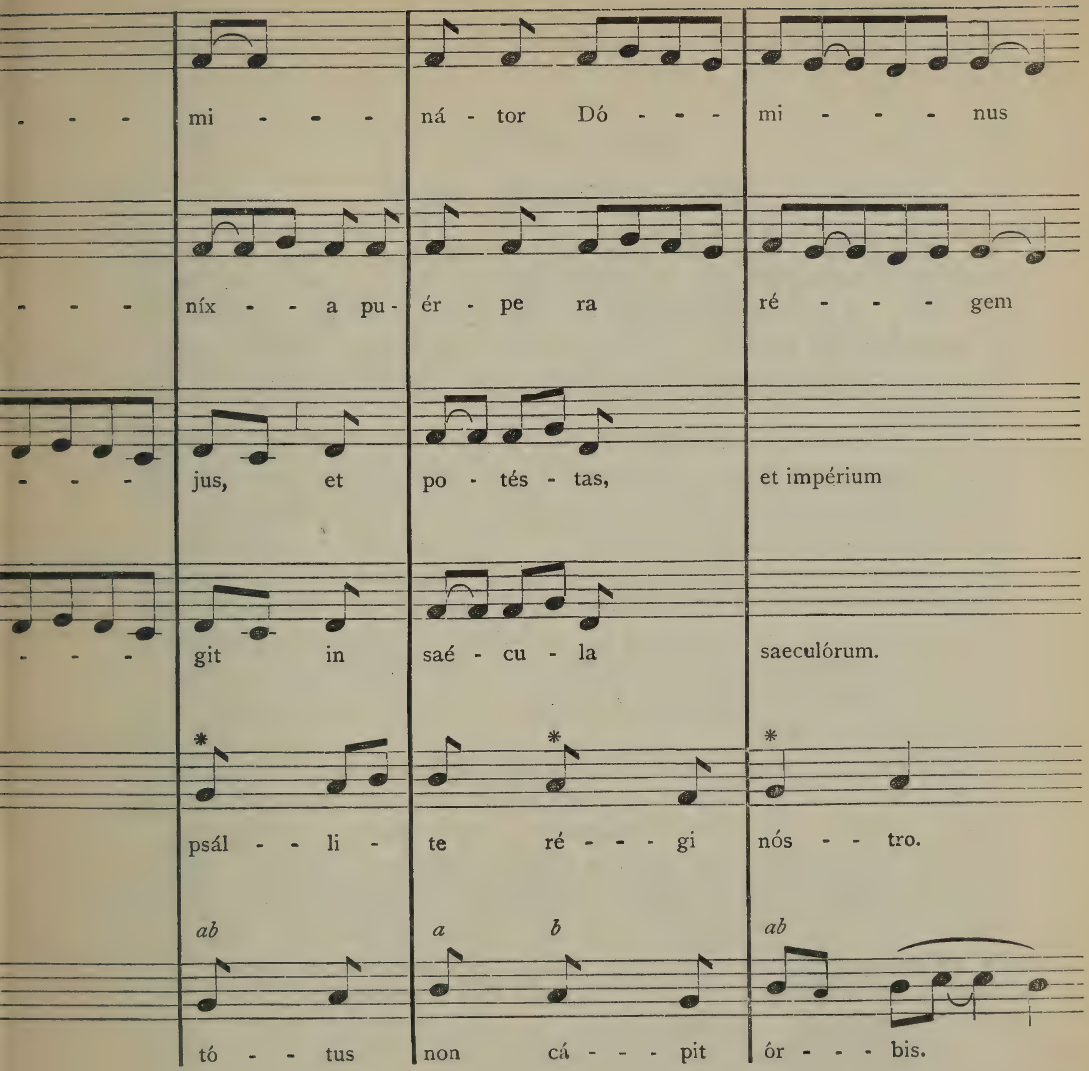
Possibly a still more useful investigation into the rhythmic nature of the hexameter, as interpreted in the twelfth century, will be to examine the melody of the introit *Salve sancta parens* in relation to the non-metrical *Ecce advenit* from which it was derived. *Ecce advenit* is found in the St. Gall antiphoner, and is itself a translation from the Greek.

Two alternative methods were open to the adapter: to make either the quantitative accents of *Salve sancta parens*, or the rhythmic accents, coincide with the rhythmic accents of *Ecce advenit*. In six cases out of eight he chose the latter case, and in each of the two remaining instances the accents of *Dóminus* and *potéstas* are not responded to by a quantitative long, but by a short and unimportant syllable. *Virgo dei genitrix* possesses an antiphon-melody in addition to the hymn-melody which we have already given at p. 23. By comparing this with a representative progenitor, *Psallite Deo nostro*, of the same group of antiphon-melodies, we trace the same principle at work: we find that the classical quantity-accents of the hexameter (marked *a* in Example 6, No. 4) coincide with the accents (*x*) *of Psallite* once only if we omit the correspondence between *nostro* and *mundi*, which is melodically variant; but that the rhythmic stresses of the hexameter (marked *b*) coincide four times with the accents of the antiphon.

Some may wish to discount the evidence of the Worcester contrapuntists and other forerunners of that new art which was destined eventually to bear a large part in the debasement of true rhythmic plainchant; but the unknown hands which adapted *Salve sancta parens* and *Virgo dei genitrix* to the then existing plainsongs are free from any such reproach. Cantor and discantor alike seem to have totally ignored the classical accents of the hexameter in favour of the natural and non-mathematical stress-rhythm of the text; it was treated by them as prose (rhythmical prose, of course, as all worthy prose must be), but as nothing more than prose. For English readers no more need be said to support the free plainsong interpretation of the hexametrical texts, and *a fortiori* the other metrical forms; but it must be pointed out that many German and some French books on musical history still seem to take it for granted that the matter is already proved in the opposite direction.

EXAMPLE 6.


1. Éc - - ce ad - vé - - nit do - - -
2. Sál - - ve sánc-ta pá - - - rens, e - - -
1. et rég- num in má - - - nu é - -
2. qui coé- lum ter - - rám - - - que ré - -
3. Psál - li - te dé- o nós-tro, psál - - li - - - - - te :
ab b a b a
4. Vír - go dé- i gé - ni - - trix, quem


- - - mi - - - ná - tor Dó - - - mi - - - nus
- - - níx - - a pu - ér - pe ra ré - - - gem
- - - jus, et po - tés - tas, et impérium
- - - git in saé - cu - la saeculórum.
*
*
*
psál - - li - te ré - - - gi nós - - tro.
ab
a
b
ab
tó - - tus non cá - - - pit ór - - - bis.

CHAPTER III.

THE HYMN-MELODIES.

WE have already remarked more than once that plainsong cannot be studied in isolation from its liturgical text; and in consistency with this truth we have endeavoured to show at some length (at the risk of wearying our readers, who are probably interested in music rather than in Latin prosody) the underlying rhythmic ideas of the Hymnarium.

It is, of course, quite impossible to embark on the printing of all the hymn-melodies in use in medieval times: the earlier centuries are largely represented by MSS. in neumatic notation, to which we can give no certain transliteration; and the later centuries are too prolific. The later history of a few tunes will be investigated, but the amount of labour which would be necessary for an exhaustive commentary on the Hymnal may be estimated by a perusal of Abbé Y. Delaporte's article in the *Révue Grégorienne* (Tournay), vol. i. (1911), pp. 133 *seqq.*, where eight and a half large octavo pages are devoted to an examination of one melody alone.

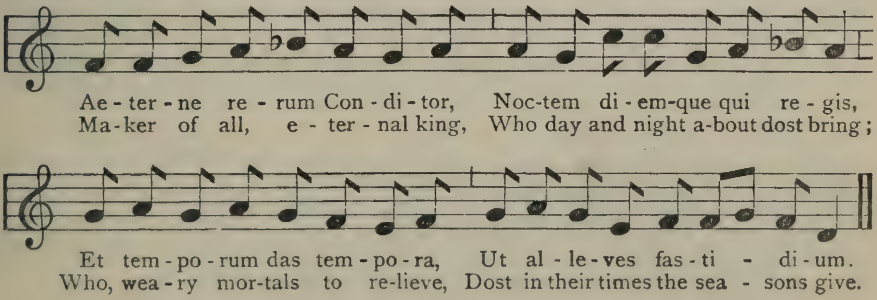
The point at which the study of Latin hymnody begins is marked by the names of St. Hilary of Poictiers (†367) and St. Ambrose of Milan (340-397). For fuller information of the literary and liturgical work of these prelates the reader is referred elsewhere. Biraghi's "Inni sinceri et carmi di S. Ambrogio" (Milan, 1862) remains the leading critical work on the question of Ambrosian authorship; and for the earlier history of Christian hymns the student is referred to Dr. H. J. W. Tillyard's "Byzantine Music and Hymnography," in series with this volume.

The usual tendency is for plainsong to become simpler, rather than more ornate, in the process of time. The low-water mark of the process was reached in the Medicean and other post-Renaissance editions of the Antiphoner, a full account of which is given in the later chapters of Dom Gatard's "Plainchant." But the principle had been gradually (though almost imperceptibly) at work all through the Middle Ages in the domain of liturgical music as a whole.

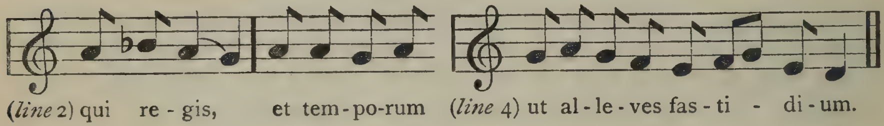
The Breviary hymns, however, present their own problem. We may take it as axiomatic that a melody universally associated, both in place and (so far back as the MSS. guide us) in time, with a particular hymn may be taken to be as old as the hymn itself. Indeed, it may be older; for it is held by some authorities that the Ambrosian writers composed their hymns upon popular Italian folk-melodies. Assuming, then, that the melodies of the earliest hymns are also the earliest melodies, we find that the syllabic and melismatic types exist side by side. We cannot help noticing in this connection that it is with the hymns (all dating from the earlier centuries) for Advent, Lent, and the Lesser Hours that the simpler syllabic tunes are most frequently found, though Dom Pothier ("Les Mélodies Grégoriennes," p. 224) says that the division is one of geography rather than of date or liturgical propriety: "On les trouve [*sc.* the syllabic tunes] rarement dans les hymnaires des régions septentrionales, où ils ont été remplacés par des mélodies plus chargées de notes."

The iambic dimeter is the metre employed by St. Ambrose, and almost exclusively by St. Gregory. Presumably for this reason it is by far the most frequent in the hymnals. We reproduce as the leading example the simple tune to *Aeterne rerum Conditor*, from the Vatican Antiphoner (1912).

On Sundays, at Lauds.

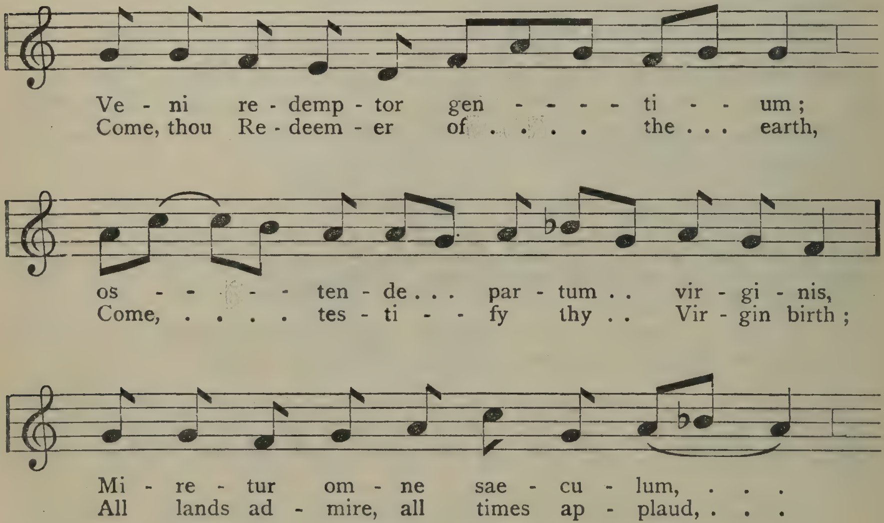

Ae - ter - ne re - rum Con - di - tor, Noc-tem di - em-que qui re - gis,
Ma - ker of all, e - ter - nal king, Who day and night a-bout dost bring;
Et tem - po - rum das tem - po - ra, Ut al - le - ves fas - ti - di - um.
Who, wea - ry mor-tals to re-lieve, Dost in their times the sea - sons give.

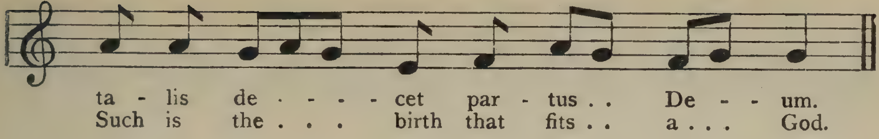
This is one of the four hymns the Ambrosian authorship of which is not called in question. The English is from a translation by W. J. Copeland in the Hymner, No. 12 (Plainsong and Medieval Music Society, 1904). The following variants are from the Sarum hymnal; the former would seem considerably to improve the melodic form, but the evidence of some early English MSS. is in favour of the Vatican form:


(*line* 2) qui re - gis, et tem - po - rum
(*line* 4) ut al - le - ves fas - ti - di - um.

It is interesting to compare the simplicity of this melody with the more ornate tune which was originally associated, according to G. M. Dreves ("Aurelius Ambrosius," p. 116) with *Veni redemptor gentium*, another one of the undoubted hymns of St. Ambrose.

MODE VIII.


Ve - ni re - demp - tor gen - - - - - ti - - um;
Come, thou Re - deem - er of . . . . . the . . . earth,
os - - - - - ten - de . . . par - tum . . vir - gi - nis,
Come, ... tes - ti - - fy thy . . Vir - gin birth;
Mi - re - tur om - ne sae - cu - lum, . . .
All lands ad - mire, all times ap - plaud, . . .


ta - lis de - - - - cet par - tus . . De - - um.
Such is the . . . birth that fits . . a . . . God.

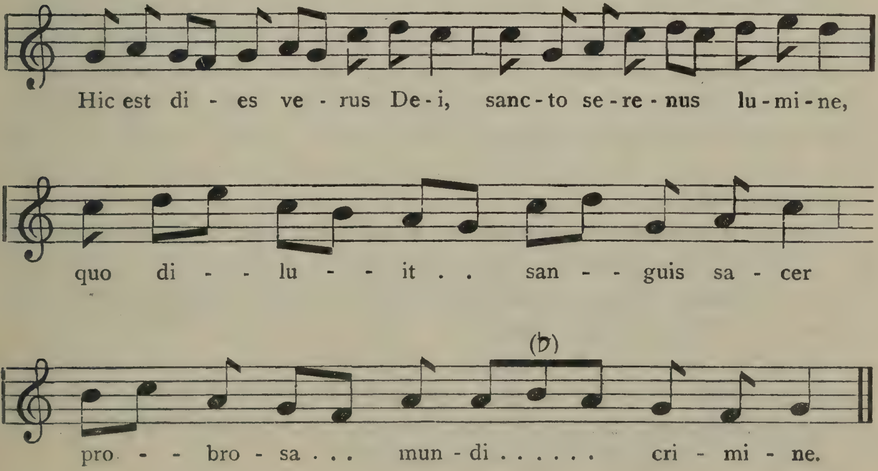
Tr. J. M. Neale.

In the second and fourth lines we notice how the ornamentation is concentrated on to the weak syllables. Students of modal questions will also be interested in the suggestion of modulation into the sixth mode, which occurs in the second line.

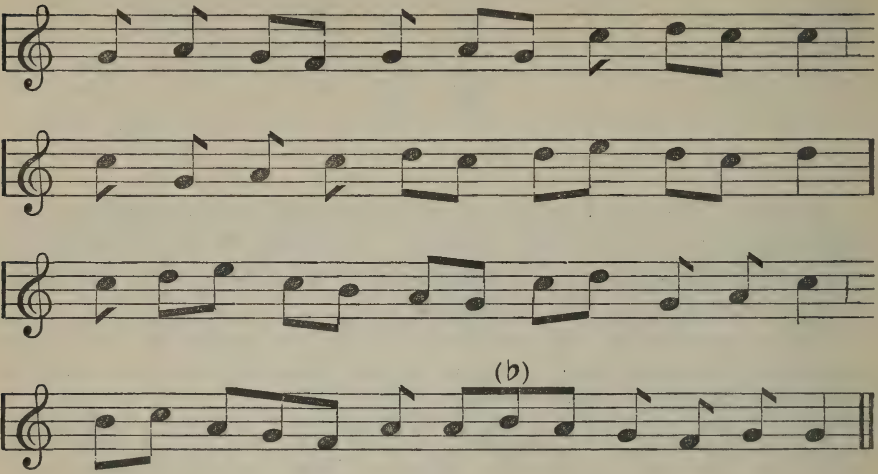
The tune now usually associated with this hymn is set in the Canterbury Hymnal (tenth century) to an old hymn, *Christe splendor gloriæ*, for feasts of Confessors, now obsolete.

Our third example of an Ambrosian tune is that usually associated with *Veni Creator Spiritus*, the hymn for Terce on Whitsunday, probably written by Hrabanus Maurus (776-856). The tune, however, is older than this hymn, and was previously sung to St. Ambrose's Easter hymn, *Hic est dies verus Dei.*

MODE VIII.


Hic est di - es ve - rus De - i, sanc - to se - re - nus lu - mi - ne,
quo di - - lu - - it . . san - - guis sa - cer
(♭)
pro - - bro - sa . . . mun - di . . . . . cri - mi - ne.

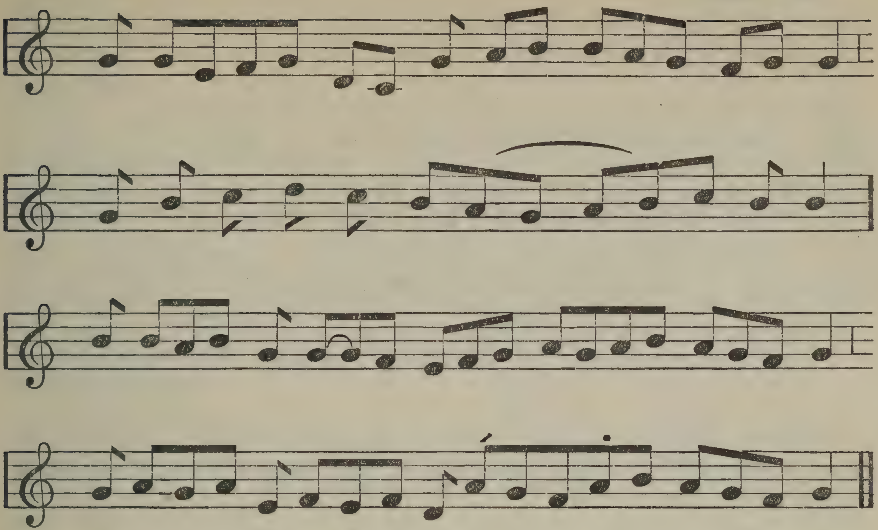
The Sarum form is rather more ornate, as follows:



The B flat marked in brackets over the torculus in the last line is found in the later medieval MSS.; but its absence in the earlier MSS. is no proof that it was not sung. In the first two lines we find the unstressed syllables again ornamented, and in the fourth line of the Vatican version the same feature is apparent; but the Sarum version of the fourth line develops the accented syllables, and does not reproduce the feature, noticeable in the Vatican version, of three single notes at the end of each line. The debased Mechlin form of this melody (well known in England through the Hymnal Noted, Hymns Ancient and Modern, and the English Hymnal) has all its ornaments on the accented syllables.

Here is a typical tune, previously unpublished, of the Northern type to which Dom Pothier refers (above, p. 31). It is from the Coldingham Hymnal (British Museum, MS. Hart, 4,664, early fourteenth century), adapted to Durham use, and was sung to the hymn *Magnus miles mirabilis* for feasts of St. Gregory. The words of the hymn are apparently of Italian origin: the tune was also sung to, and perhaps should be better identified with, the local hymn *Regalis ostro sanguinis*, for the feast of St. Oswald, King of Northumbria.

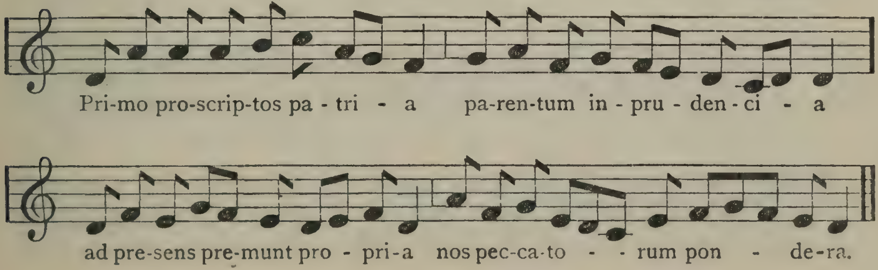
Mode VIII.



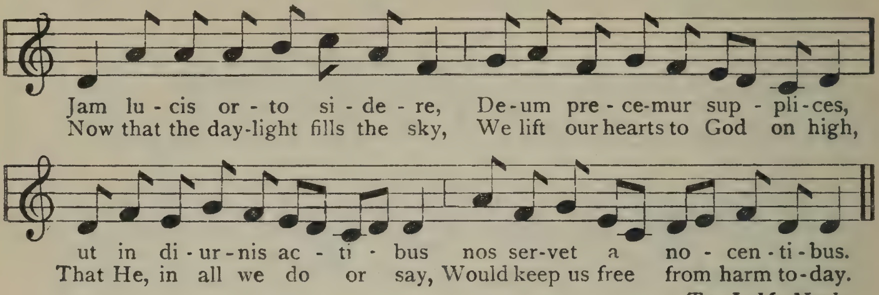
The tendency in this type of tune is to ornament the strong syllables, not the weak. Compare the Durham tune 78 in "Plainsong Hymn Melodies and Sequences" (The Plainsong and Medieval Music Society, 1914 edition).

Another Northern tune, also quite unknown to-day, is the fine melody which was used at York to *Jam lucis orto sidere*, and at Roskilde, Denmark, to *Primo proscriptos patria*, of St. Canute Lavard.

Mode I.

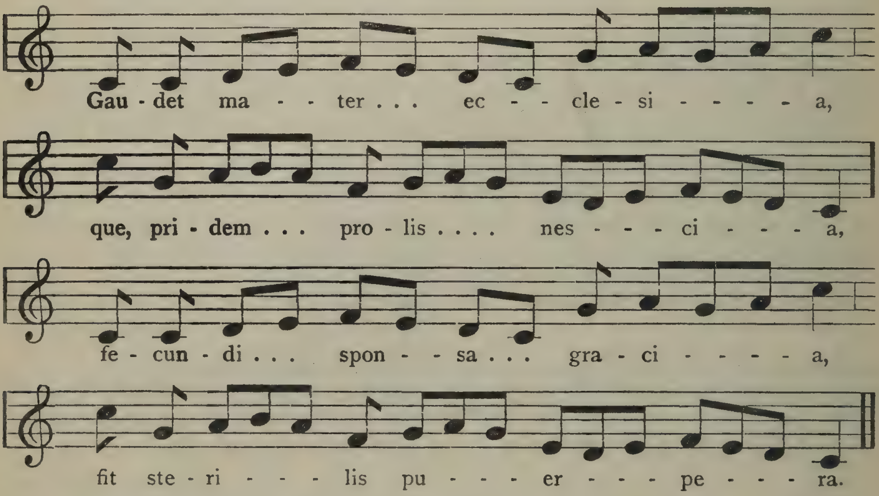

Pri-mo pro-scrip-tos pa - tri - a pa-ren-tum in - pru - den - ci - a
ad pre-sens pre-munt pro - pri-a nos pec-ca-to - - rum pon - de-ra.

The above is the Roskilde version (MS. SH8A8vo of the University Library at Kiel, thirteenth century). The York version (MS., Sion College, Arc. L 40. 2) is simpler:

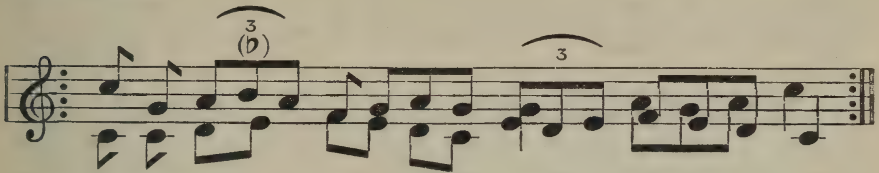

Jam lu - cis or - to si - de - re, De-um pre - ce-mur sup - pli-ces,
Now that the day-light fills the sky, We lift our hearts to God on high,
ut in di - ur - nis ac - ti - bus nos ser-vet a no - cen - ti - bus.
That He, in all we do or say, Would keep us free from harm to-day.

Tr. J. M. Neale.

Here is another Roskilde tune, from the same MS., and of even greater interest. Like the preceding, it was used for the office of St. Canute Lavard:

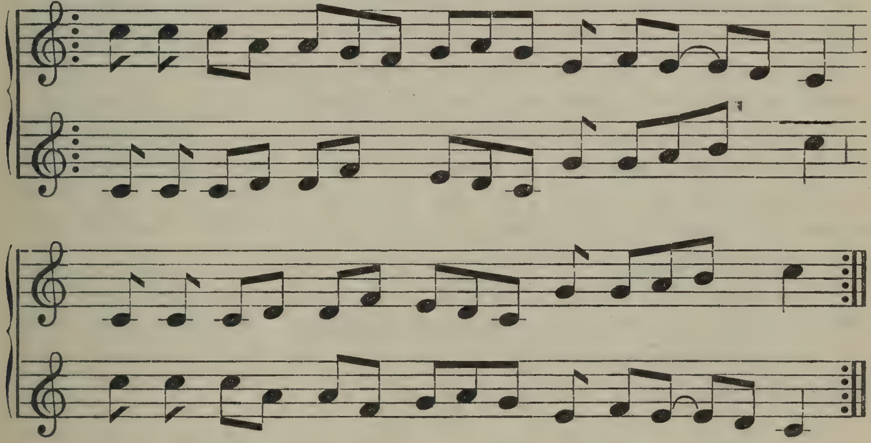

Gau - det ma - - ter . . . ec - - cle - si - - - - - a,
que, pri - dem . . . pro - lis . . . . nes - - - ci - - - a,
fe - cun - di . . . spon - - sa . . . gra - ci - - - - a,
fit ste - ri - - - lis pu - - - er - - - pe - - - ra.

Whether this and the foregoing tune were borrowed by Denmark from Northumbria, or *vice versa,* we cannot determine with certainty. Presuming from the date of the MSS. that the latter was the case, we find that by the time it had been adopted by the Coldingham nuns for their tune at Terce *in praecipuis festis* someone had discovered that the melody could be sung in what we should call nowadays "double canon," thus:

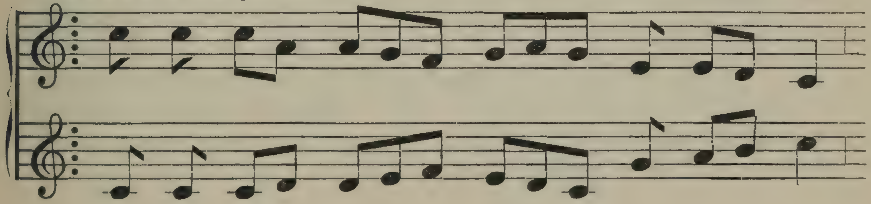


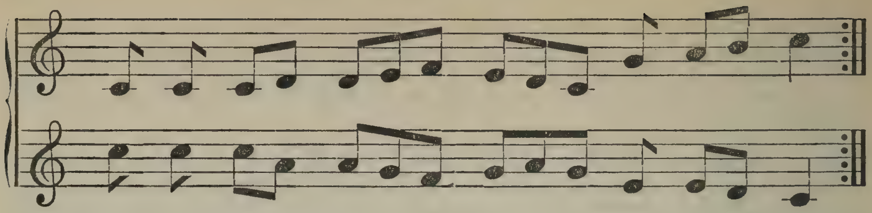
And in the Durham and York MSS. referred to the hymn is actually written in score, appearing thus when transcribed into twentieth-century notation:

Nunc Sancte nobis spiritus. DURHAM FORM.



Nunc Sancte nobis spiritus. YORK FORM.





In the York MS., the later of the two, the version has the appearance of being a polished edition of the Durham tune; it has no passages necessitating the singing of two notes by one voice to three of the other, and the discord of the second on the seventh syllable is smoothed away.

The modality is frankly that of the modern major mode, and betrays a secular origin. Angul Hammerich, in "Medieval Musical Relics of Denmark" (Breitkopf and Härtel, 1912), p. 82, says the melody has "a touch of the hale and hearty Scandinavian character about it. It might easily be taken for a native of the North." Although Hammerich was not aware of its existence at York and Coldingham, we are disposed to agree with him as to the Scandinavian origin. The tune is written from C to C at Roskilde and York; but the Coldingham nuns made a pathetic attempt to conform it with the Mixolydian mode, writing it from G to G. They did not mark their *F* with a ♯, but almost certainly sang it as such. In the history of the "leading-note" this early specimen of harmony is of great value.

The hymns for Prime and Terce had a large range of tunes in the Durham MS., no less than ten each: Gisburn (Bodleian, MS. Laud lat. 5) used eight for *Jam lucis orto sidere* and five for *Nunc Sancte nobis spiritus.*

HISTORICAL ACCURACY OF THE MELODIES.

It is now time to give some idea as to the degree of accuracy with which the hymn-melodies have been handed down to us. As regards the antiphons and other portions of the Latin church music the question is relatively simple; for there is only one stream of current tradition to be considered, and the *Editio Vaticana* holds the field undisputed. But when we come to the hymn-melodies there do exist to-day, as a matter of fact, the forms known to us as the "French Paroissien" tunes—a living alternative tradition side by side with the Vaticana. Many of these are sufficiently well known in England through the "English Hymnal," the works of the Rev. J. B. Croft, and other books. But no investigation has yet been made, or at least published, so far as we are aware, with the object of exploring the past history of the French Paroissien tunes, and of judging how far they are reliable witnesses of a sound tradition.

The first thing to remark about these tunes is that the large majority of the Breviary hymn-melodies are undoubtedly descended from true plainsong; the second, that they were still non-metrical as a rule in the eighteenth-century chant-books. For it is not till the nineteenth century that we get an invariable and regular metrical form, which even then is confined to the Sapphics as often as not. The third fact, which the investigations tabulated below bring to light, is that their *melodic outline*, when measured by the standards of the early MSS., is frequently one of unexpected accuracy.

We propose to carry the reader through three representative tunes, of differing metre—viz., *Conditor alme siderum*, *Ave maris stella*, and

Ut queant laxis. The MSS. and printed books which have been employed in making these comparisons are as follows:

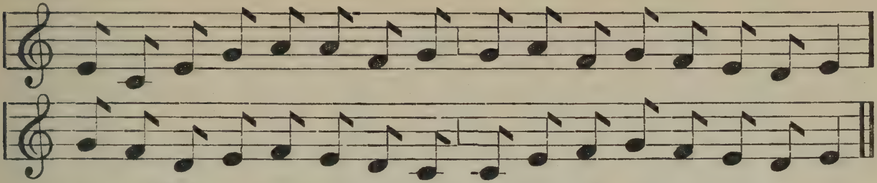
Bod. Laud lat. 95	*c.* 1200	Ely (Sarum use)	A
Bod. Douce 381	xiij. cent.		B
B.M. Add. 35285	xiij. cent.	Gisburn (Augustinian)	C
B.M. Harley 2951	xiij. cent.		D
Bod. Canon. lit. 370	between 1266 and 1300	Padua	E
B.M. Harley 4664	*c.* 1300	Coldingham (Durham use)	F
B.M. Add. 16975	xiij.–xiv. cent.	Lire (dio. of Evreux, Normandy)	G
Salisbury, Erlyngham Breviary	xiv. cent.	Sarum	H
Bod. Ashm. 1523	xiv. cent.	Bromholm, Norfolk (Cluniac)	J
Bod. Canon. lit. 377	xiv. cent.	Mantua (Carthusian)	K
Vienna, Trent MS. 92	before 1475	Cambrai	L

Printed Books.

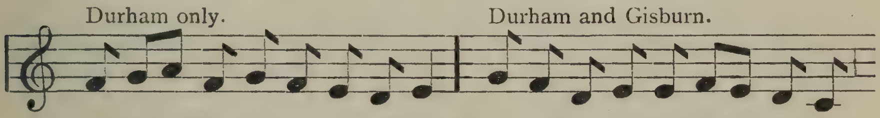
York, 1517	*a*	Barcelona, 1865	*k*
Sarum, 1541	*b*	Ratisbon, 1874	*l*
Milan, 1574	*c*	Evreux, 1877	*m*
Paris, 1723	*d*	Rennes, 1878	*n*
Lisieux, 1753	*e*	Mechlin, 1881	*o*
Avignon, 1819	*f*	Amiens, late xix. cent. (N.D.) ...	*p*
Beauvais, 1842	*g*	Solesmes, 1885, 1897	*q*
Paris, 1851	*h*	Rouen, 1890	*r*
Autun, 1860	*j*	Vatican, 1912	*s*

A. *Conditor Alme Siderum.*

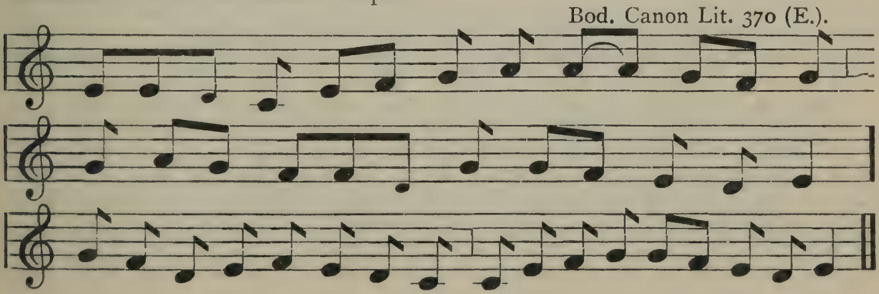
This melody is too simple and too well defined to admit of very much variation. The points of interest are in the tendencies to introduce passing notes, and to transpose adjacent notes in descending scale passages to add interest to the melody. The accepted text which we will take for examination in this case will not be the Vatican form, but that used by the Plainsong and Medieval Music Society in their "Hymn Melodies and Sequences" (1914), which is identical with the MSS. D, H, and K of the foregoing table, and with the printed Sarum hymnal of 1541 (*b*).



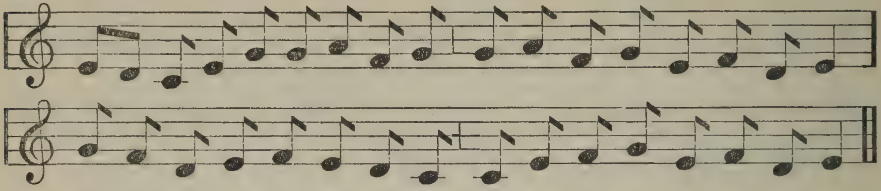
Of the modern recensions, the Ratisbon version of 1874 is note for note the same: Vaticana varies only in giving G instead of A for the fifth note, in which it is borne out by all the other versions from 1723 onwards which have been used in the collation of this particular tune, nine in all (*dfgjmnoqr*), as well as by the MSS. G and L. The Lire MS. has also a passing-note in the opening—see the counterpoints appended. B is written by a careless scribe; the last line reads D E D E F E D E, probably a mistake for D E F G F E D E. This form of the last line, opening with D instead of C, is found also in the Gisburn and Durham MSS., the second and third lines of which are as under:



The early MS. from Ely (A) has the third note D for E, and there are two transpositions in the cadences of the last two lines, which read E F D C for F E D C, and F D E E for F E D E, respectively; this third line is similar to that of Gisburn and Durham just quoted. The most ornate form of the tunes comes, strange to say, from Italy, in defiance of what we should expect:

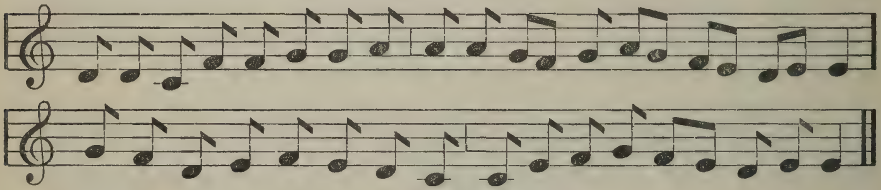


The form used by Dufay in the Trent Codices shows a passing-note at the beginning, and some effective transpositions in the second and fourth lines:

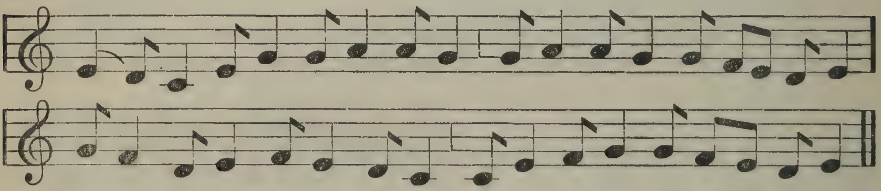


The York version of 1517 is identical with our normal text, except that it follows A (*cf.* also C and F) in ending the third line E F D C for F E D C.

The tune appears in the Ambrosian books, apparently for the first time, in 1574. Its first two lines are totally different, its third normal, its last ornamented with some success.

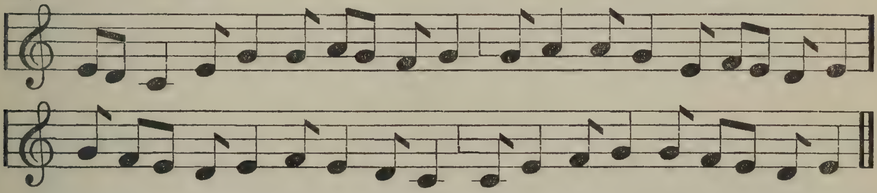


We now reach the French diocesan and paroissien forms. The normal type is that found in the books of Paris, Beauvais, and Evreux (marked *d*, *g*, *m*).

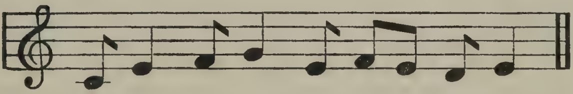


But the form of the melody is not the only point of interest now; we have also to look at the indications of mensurate time. For in the books d and g the measured scheme of three beats to the bar is strictly followed: the quavers of our reproduction being represented by "diamond notes," the crotchets by square puncta at Paris, by virgæ at Beauvais. The Paris system of notation is therefore seen to be identical with that used, *e.g.*, by Merbecke, who states in the preface to his "Boke of Common Praier Noted" that the virga is a "strene" note, equal to two square puncta ("breves"), and that the breve is equal to two "diamond" puncta ("semybreves"). This rigid mensurate notation is only used in the Paris chant-books of the period for tunes which are nearly or quite syllabic—viz., *Ave maris stella*, below. The Evreux chant of 1877, on the other hand, brings us into the sphere of reforming influences; the melodic scheme is identical, but the "triple time" has disappeared, the melody being in square notes except for the penultimate of each line, which is a diamond preceded by a virga, the virga here indicating the principal accent of the iambic dimeter, referred to on p. 9. The same system obtains in the Avignon Vesperale of 1819, where the difference from Evreux is confined to the penultimate of the first line (G for A) and the omission of the passing-note E on the antepenultimate of the second line.

The high-water mark of triple swing is reached in the Rouen paroissien of 1890:



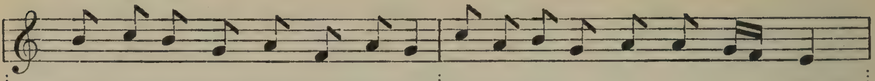
The form of Rennes and Solesmes is most restrained, being the melody of *dgm* with all the passing-notes omitted. Autun (1860) has the first line as Rouen, the second and third as Paris, and the last as under:



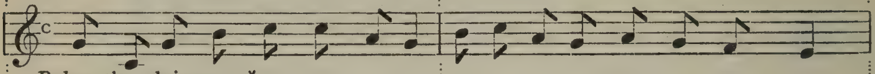
The Mechlin Vesperale of 1881 relates more closely to L than to any other one of our sources; it omits the passing-note D at the beginning, and the third note of the second line is A instead of F.

Before passing on to the next tune, we print a few old descants and counterpoints to the melody.

Lire descant (MS. G).

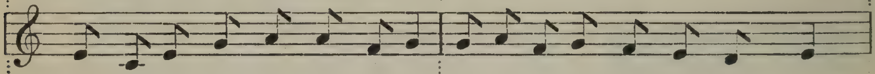


Morley's faburden (Hawkins, 1875 reprint, I. 256).

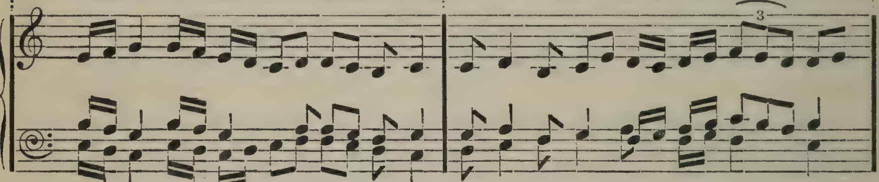


Below the plainsong *.

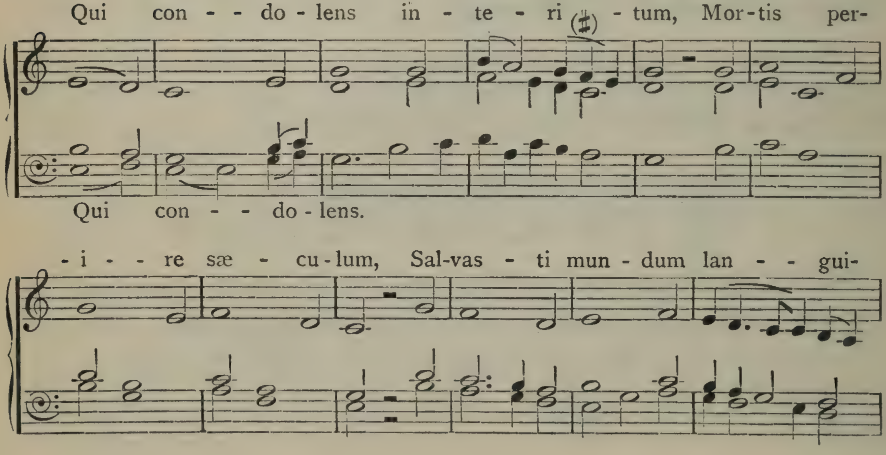
Plainsong (form as at Lire, MS. G).



Setting from Bod. Laud lat. 95 (MS. A), *later hand*, XIV. or XV. century.



DUFAY.


Qui con - - do - lens in - te - ri (♯) - tum, Mor - tis per-
Qui con - - do - lens.
- i - - re sæ - cu - lum, Sal - vas - ti mun - dum lan - - gui-

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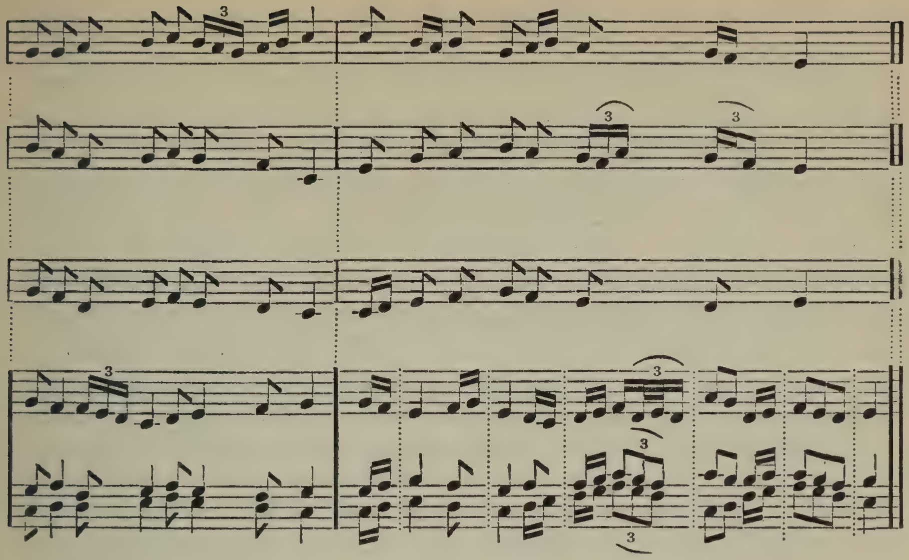
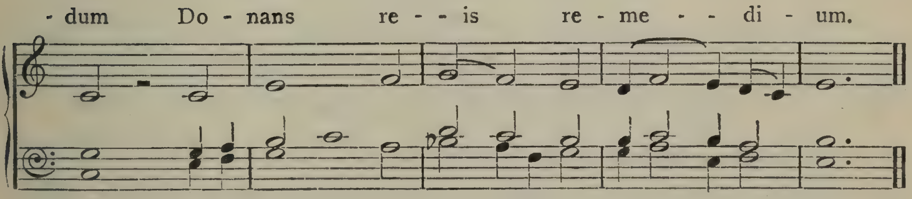
* *I.e.*, apparently for men's voices against a canto fermo of boys.

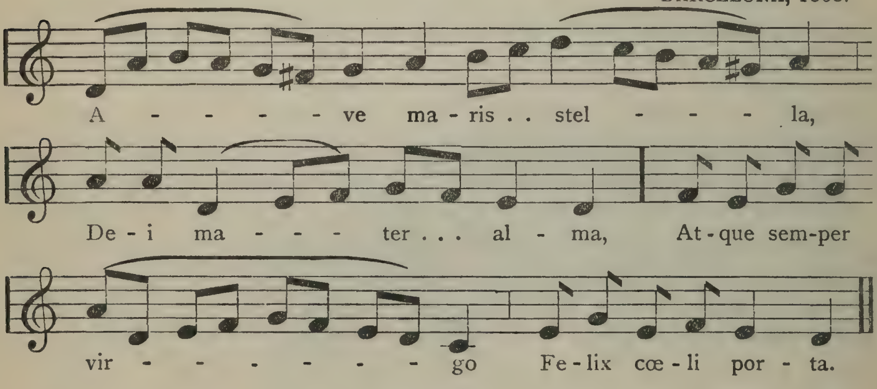



- dum Do - nans re - - is re - me - - di - um.

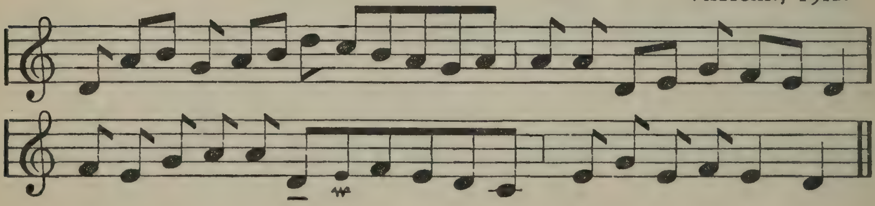
B. *Ave Maris Stella.*

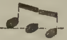
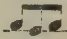
Dom Gatard ("Plainchant," p. 48) tells us how by the end of the sixteenth century there had grown up "current theories of quantity and accentuation, according to which the groups were always kept on the accented syllables, while short penultimates might never carry more than one note." *Ave Maris Stella* is an excellent example of this tendency, for it has a well-marked ornament at the end of the first and third lines, which the more debased of the later Continental books push back to the accented penultimate. It is noteworthy that, as regards the third line, the French diocesan forms (with the exception of the Autun paroissien) do *not* err in this direction; but that of the eleven forms later than 1700 here collated (*dfhjklnoqrs*) the Solesmes and Vatican recensions are the only editions which keep the ornament of the first line in its original place. The versions which have gone astray in the third line, in addition to the one mentioned, are those of Barcelona and Mechlin. The former is of interest as a specimen of low-level plainchant; we will quote it first, and add the Vatican text for comparison:

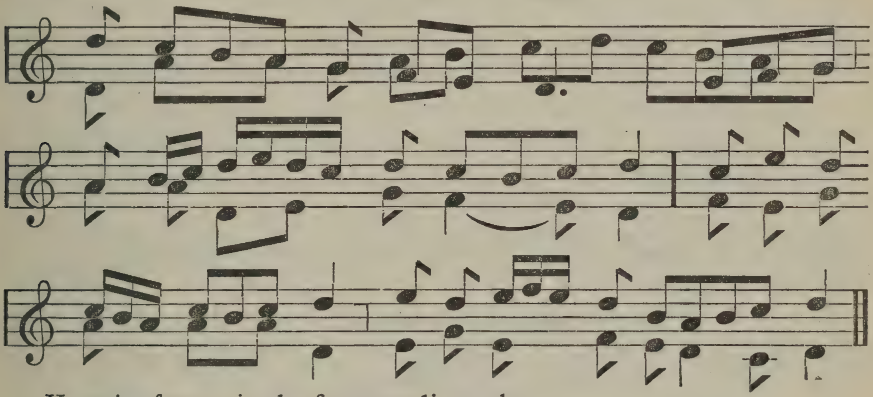
BARCELONA, 1860.


A - - - - - ve ma - ris . . stel - - - la,
De - i ma - - - ter . . . al - ma, At - que sem-per
vir - - - - - - go Fe - lix cœ - li por - ta.

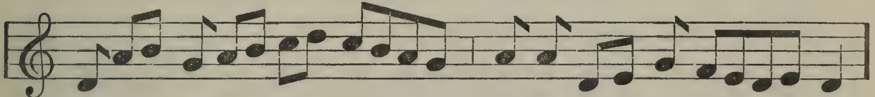
VATICAN, 1912.



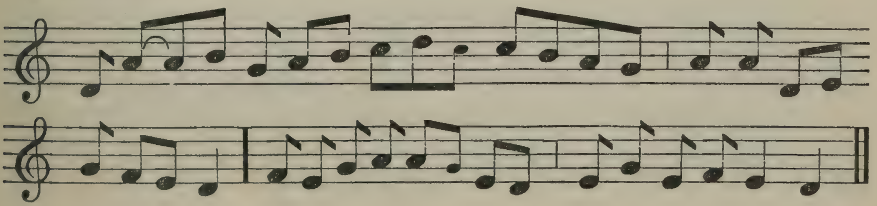
The only difference between our earliest MS. (A) and the latest edition, that of *s*, is in the ornament at the end of the third line, which reads D E D C in A. The second note of the first line and the fifth note of the third line (both accented syllables) are "doubled" in A and G, and in each case the Lire descant given below sings  or  against the distropha, thus supplying evidence in favour of the "quarter-tone below" interpretation of the apostropha-form.



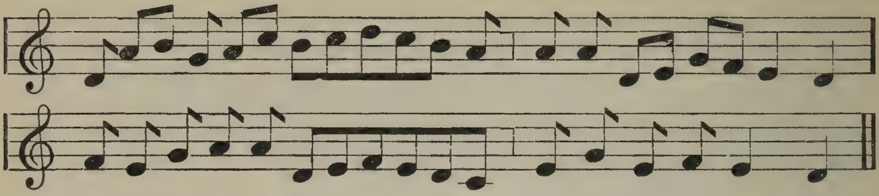
K varies from s in the first two lines, thus:



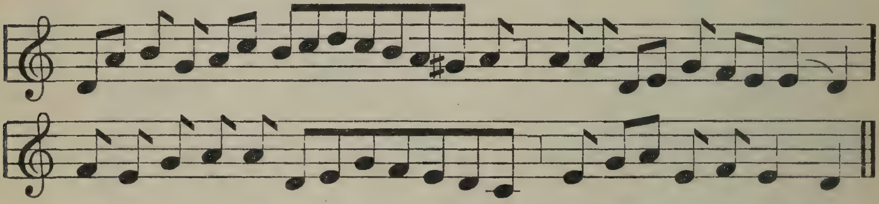
The form given in *b* reduces the third-line ornament to a plain D, and has an apostropha A on the second note of each of the first two lines. The late note A of the first line is omitted, as in G K *a*, and the penultimate E becomes E D C. Altogether the preservation of the melody at Salisbury does not seem to have been very felicitous; the York form is better:



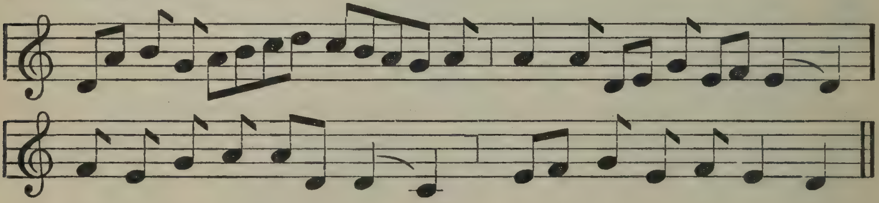
Of the Continental versions, those of Avignon and Rennes agree in this:



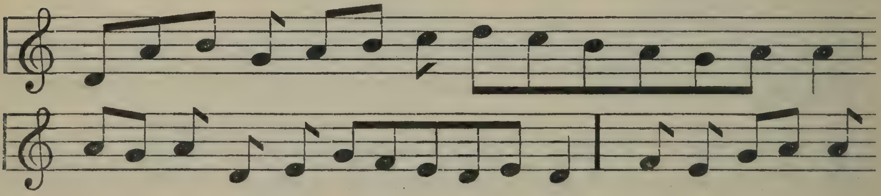
from which *d* differs only in the fifth syllable, which is prolonged to B C D C B A G. The Paris Eucologe of 1851 gives us a sharpened "leading-note of the relative dominant," as the cadence of A in the first line was thought to be: we have already seen this, with a sharpened F, in the Barcelona chant.

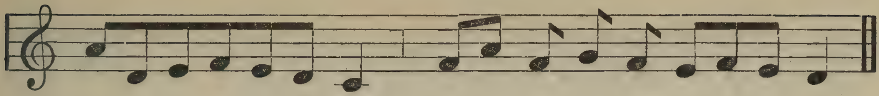


Autun, like the above, does not hold with the melodic prominence given to the weak second syllable of *Ave:*

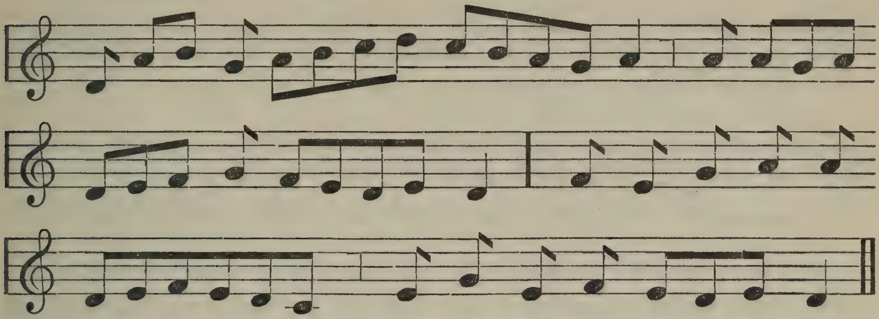


Mechlin goes a step further:

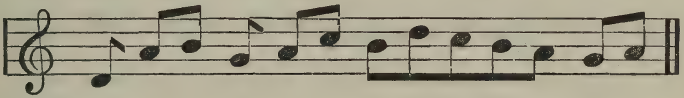




Ratisbon is a florid form:

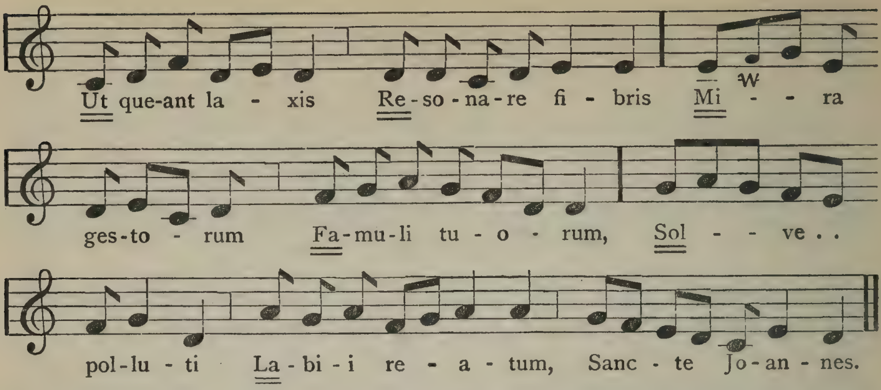


Solesmes (1897) sings $\overline{\text{GF}}$ E for G $\overline{\text{FE}}$ in the second-line cadence, but otherwise agrees with Vatican: as does Rouen, except for its first line:

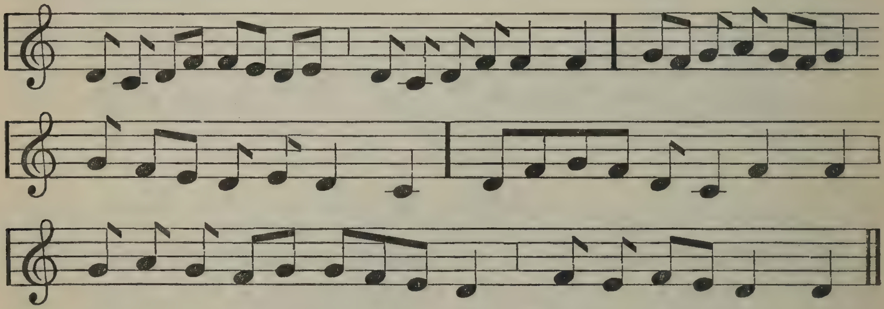


C. *Ut Queant Laxis*

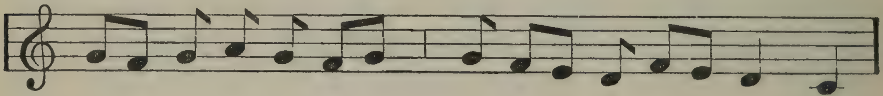
This hymn, for the feast of the Nativity of St. John Baptist, is one of the best known of the Sapphic species; for the initial notes of the phrases of one of its melodies form a rising scale of seven notes, and the syllables were taken by Guido of Arezzo (died *circa* 1050) to form the symbols of his hexachord. They are still (with the substitution of *do* for *ut*) in use as the basis of the tonic sol-fa system to-day. There seems to be a widespread notion that the tonic sol-fa system is an invention of the Victorian era; but the essential idea of the system—to wit, a short, convenient syllabic name for each note of the scale in relation to its keynote, and the very names themselves—have a continuous history of nine hundred years in musical education.


W
Ut que-ant la - xis Re-so-na-re fi - bris Mi - - ra
ges-to - rum Fa-mu-li tu - o - rum, Sol - - ve . .
pol-lu - ti La - bi - i re - a - tum, Sanc - te Jo - an - nes.

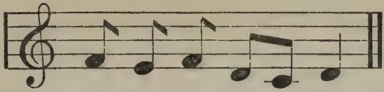
But the tune which we take for our analytical consideration is one rather more widely associated with the hymn; and as a leading text for comparison we will print the version given by our MSS. A, D, and J (the last MS. gives the first lines of the melodies only):



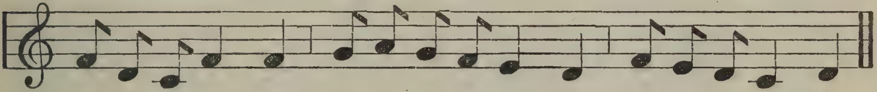
B has only one difference, the opening neum of the third line being D F G F E F. In the Coldingham Noted Breviary (MS. F) a variant of the latter half of the first line appears, having E instead of F for the fourth note; this is also found in K *defghjnpqr:* while the second line is as follows:



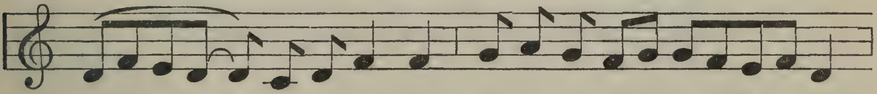
and the fourth



This last is a "highly respectable" variant, which is followed by G, K, the York and Sarum sixteenth-century printed texts, and the Ratisbon and Vatican recensions. G introduces us to the syllabic form of the latter half of the second line, F E D E D C, so universal in France in post-Renaissance days; it is followed by L *defghjnpqrs*—*i.e.*, all the Continental forms examined for the purpose of this analysis, with the single exception of K and Ratisbon, which show a medial stage in the evolution of the shorter form (G F D E D C). L has a unique variant for the former half of the second line—viz., $\overline{\mathrm{GF}}$ G A F G—and the third and fourth lines syllabic, thus:

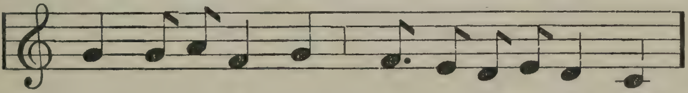


These two syllabic lines are found in the French books *deghjnqr*,[1] of which *g* and *h* have the penultimate C raised with a sharp sign. The third line of K goes thus—somewhat ornate:



The York book of 1517 ends the second line $\overline{\mathrm{FE}}$ DE FD C; the Sarum hymnal of 1541 opens the same line $\overline{\mathrm{GF}}$ G A $\overline{\mathrm{GF}}$ $\overline{\mathrm{FG}}$, a form also found at Lisieux (*e*), which has a distinctive final cadence F D D C D.

At Paris in 1723 we reach indications of a metrical system which is not, however, strictly regular in its bars; we also arrive for the first time at the syllabic second line, which has held sway in France for 200 years:



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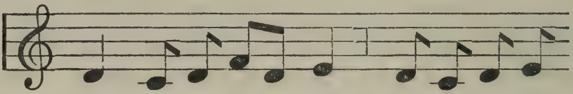
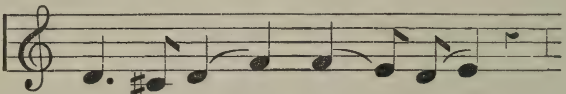
[1] The Paris Antiphonale of 1723 prints F instead of D as the second note of line 3; this is quite probably a misprint.

Nivers, the Paris editor (or Ballard, the printer), was apparently shy of producing a note to represent a semiquaver on the seventh syllable, or of introducing a value less than the "diamond." Berenguier, of Avignon, however, by using virga and square punctum for crotchet and quaver, has a diamond to spare for the semiquaver. But the virga had to do duty at Avignon for the dotted quaver as well as for the crotchet. The third line of the Avignon melody begins F C D.

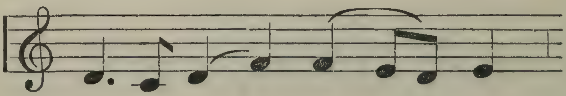
Beauvais opens thus:



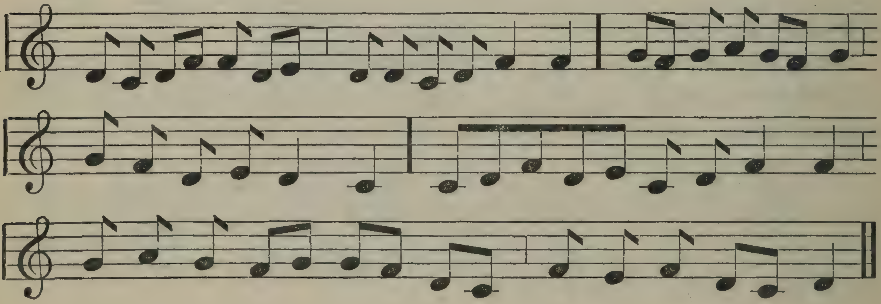
the last four notes showing how it has not yet fixed the metrical rhythm as given at p. 10 above, which appears in integrity in the Eucologe of 1851 (*h*). The opening line of this last is as follows:



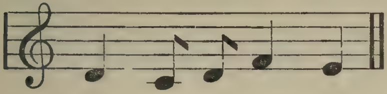
Autun (1860) begins thus:

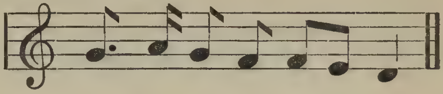


while *n*, *q* and *r* follow the original form of the first line (D C $\overline{\text{DF}}$ $\overline{\text{FE}}$ $\overline{\text{DE}}$). Ratisbon, as usual, is sufficiently unlike all the other versions to necessitate printing in full:

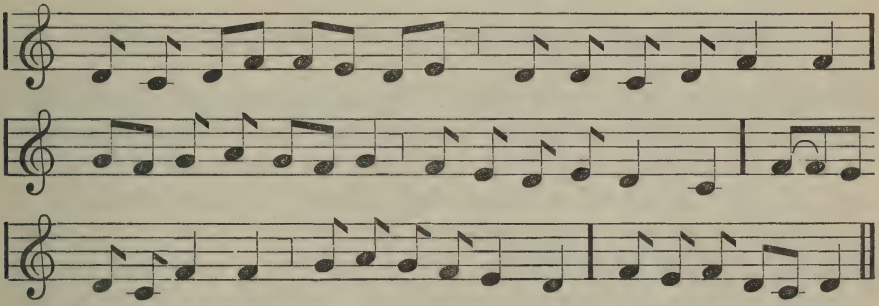


Amiens gives the usual paroissien form, with peculiarities in the opening of the first line, and in the end of the third line:





Rouen has its second line identical with Vatican, otherwise following paroissien form; the Vatican edition is as under:



CHAPTER IV.

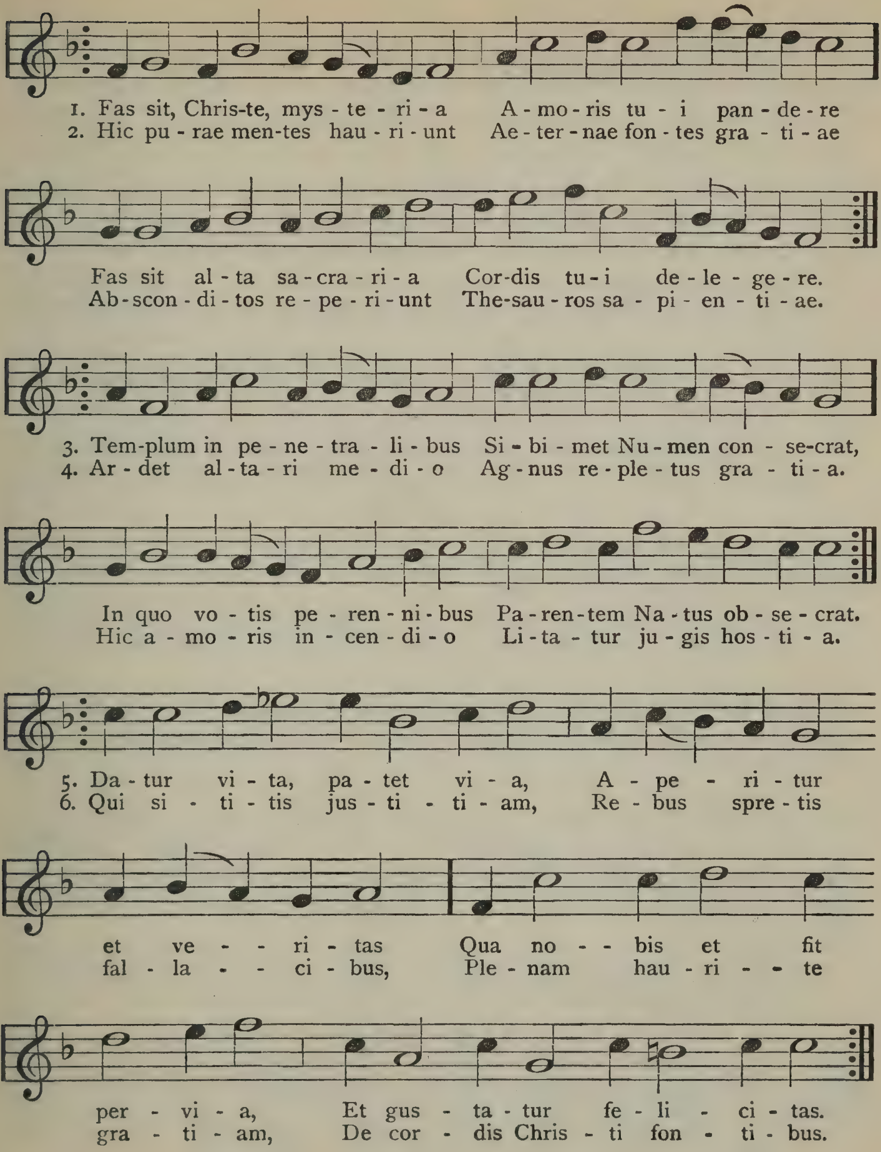
THE FINAL DEVELOPMENT OF THE FORM.

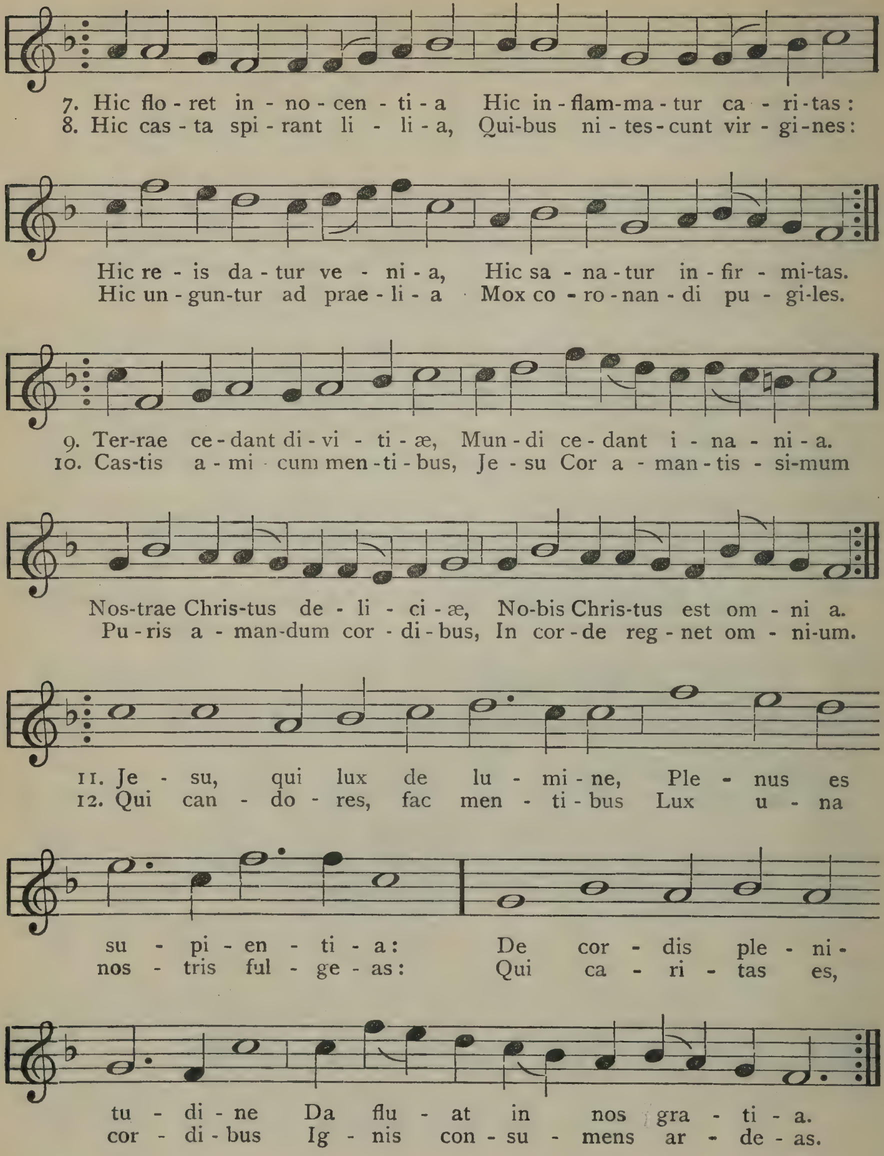
We have endeavoured to show by a body of evidence, not stupefying in amount, but selected at random, and therefore genuinely representative, that the French hymnody of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries was not out of the stream of plainsong history. Rather should it be estimated at its true value, deficient as a witness of minute rhythmic accuracy through its metricality, but valuable as a witness of the true melodic outlines, and as a locus of new composition. For the final development of the form has branched into two streams:

1. The compositions of the anonymous French musicians who were associated with the liturgical "diocesan" reformers, headed by Coffin and the Santeuils in Paris.

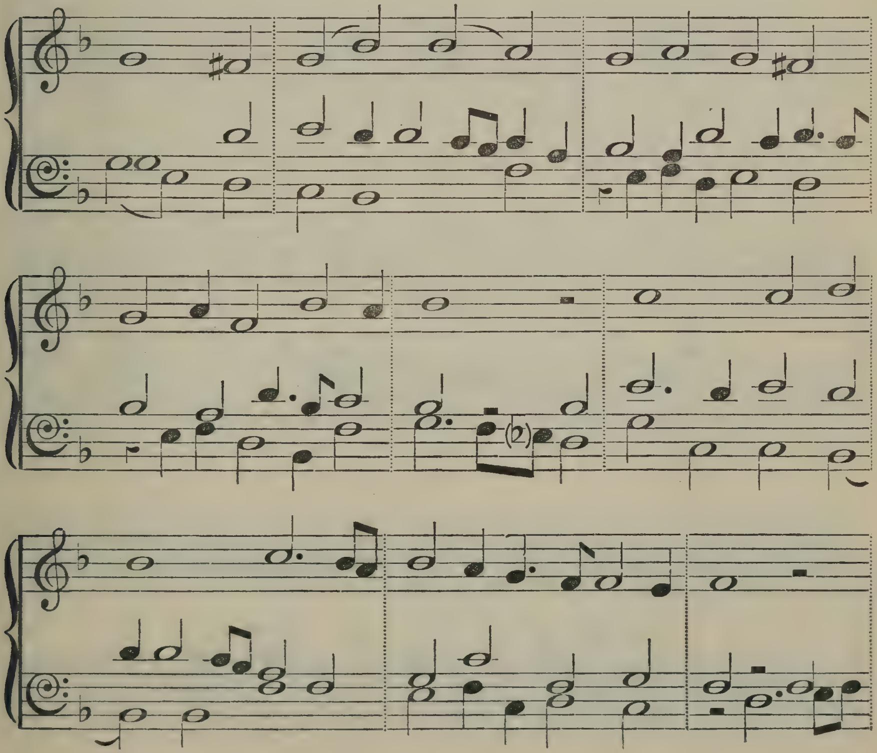
2. The development of ancient plainchant through occasional descants of the Durham, Lire, and Worcester types to the full glory of the polyphony of Palestrina, Byrd, and Vittoria. What is certain is that the true successor of the plainsong hymn, as an art-form, is not the ordinary English hymn or hymn-tune—these derive from Geneva and the Huguenots: the true successor of the plainsong hymn-tune is the polyphonic motet.

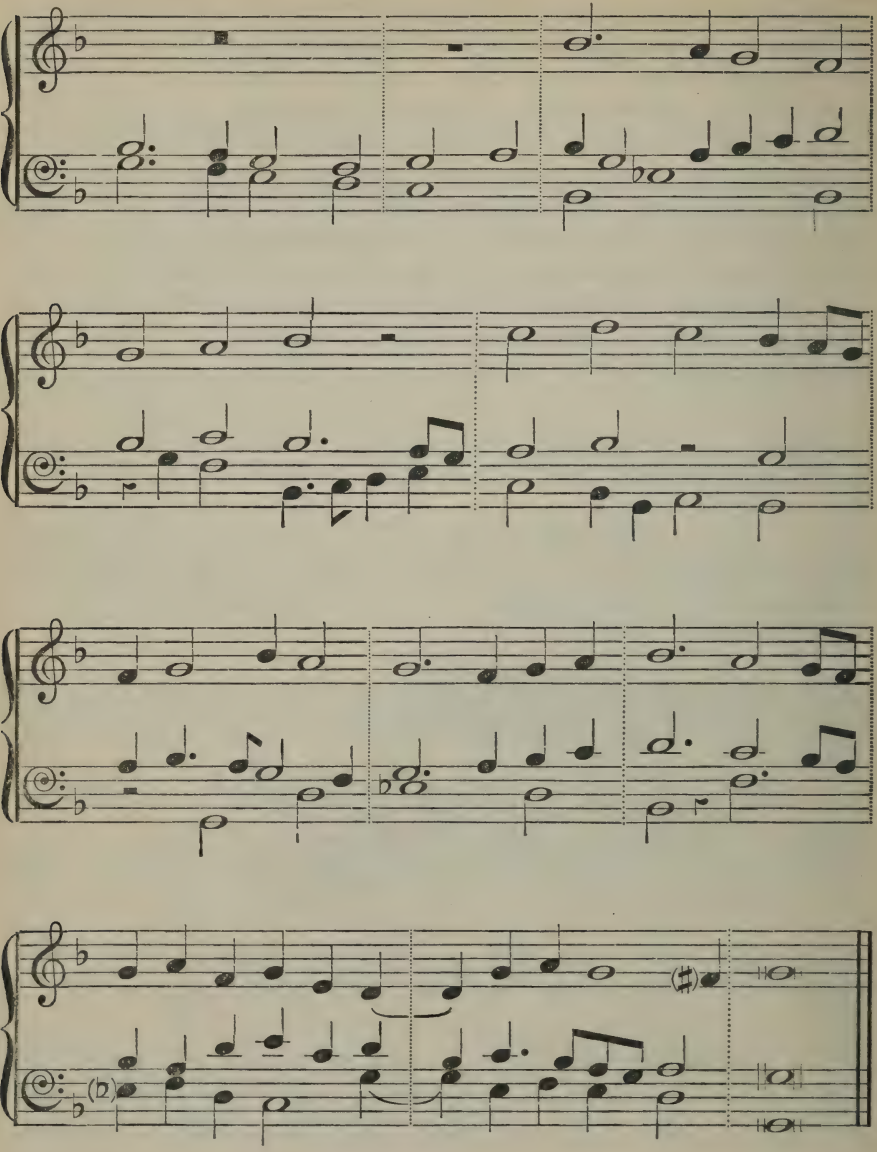
As a last example of the former type we give the sequence for the Feast of the Sacred Heart, from the Paris Eucologe of 1851. It is an illustration of the very highest type of sequence-composition of late date; it is distinctly the work of an artist, and is quite frank about its modulation to the subdominant key, with the necessary employment of E♭ as an accidental. It is found also in the Evreux Gradual.


1. Fas sit, Chris-te, mys - te - ri - a A - mo - ris tu - i pan - de - re
2. Hic pu - rae men-tes hau - ri - unt Ae - ter - nae fon - tes gra - ti - ae
Fas sit al - ta sa - cra - ri - a Cor-dis tu - i de - le - ge - re.
Ab - scon - di - tos re - pe - ri - unt The-sau - ros sa - pi - en - ti - ae.
3. Tem-plum in pe - ne - tra - li - bus Si - bi - met Nu - men con - se-crat,
4. Ar - det al - ta - ri me - di - o Ag - nus re - ple - tus gra - ti - a.
In quo vo - tis pe - ren - ni - bus Pa - ren - tem Na - tus ob - se - crat.
Hic a - mo - ris in - cen - di - o Li - ta - tur ju - gis hos - ti - a.
5. Da - tur vi - ta, pa - tet vi - a, A - pe - ri - tur
6. Qui si - ti - tis jus - ti - ti - am, Re - bus spre - tis
et ve - - ri - tas Qua no - - bis et fit
fal - la - - ci - bus, Ple - nam hau - ri - - te
per - vi - a, Et gus - ta - tur fe - li - ci - tas.
gra - ti - am, De cor - dis Chris - ti fon - ti - bus.


7. Hic flo - ret in - no - cen - ti - a Hic in - flam-ma - tur ca - ri - tas :
8. Hic cas - ta spi - rant li - li - a, Qui-bus ni - tes - cunt vir - gi - nes :
Hic re - is da - tur ve - ni - a, Hic sa - na - tur in - fir - mi-tas.
Hic un - gun-tur ad prae - li - a Mox co - ro - nan - di pu - gi-les.
9. Ter-rae ce - dant di - vi - ti - æ, Mun - di ce - dant i - na - ni - a.
10. Cas-tis a - mi - cum men - ti - bus, Je - su Cor a - man - tis - si-mum
Nos-trae Chris-tus de - li - ci - æ, No-bis Chris-tus est om - ni a.
Pu - ris a - man-dum cor - di - bus, In cor - de reg - net om - ni-um.
11. Je - su, qui lux de lu - mi - ne, Ple - nus es
12. Qui can - do - res, fac men - ti - bus Lux u - na
su - pi - en - ti - a : De cor - dis ple - ni -
nos - tris ful - ge - as : Qui ca - ri - tas es,
tu - di - ne Da flu - at in nos gra - ti - a.
cor - di - bus Ig - nis con - su - mens ar - de - as.

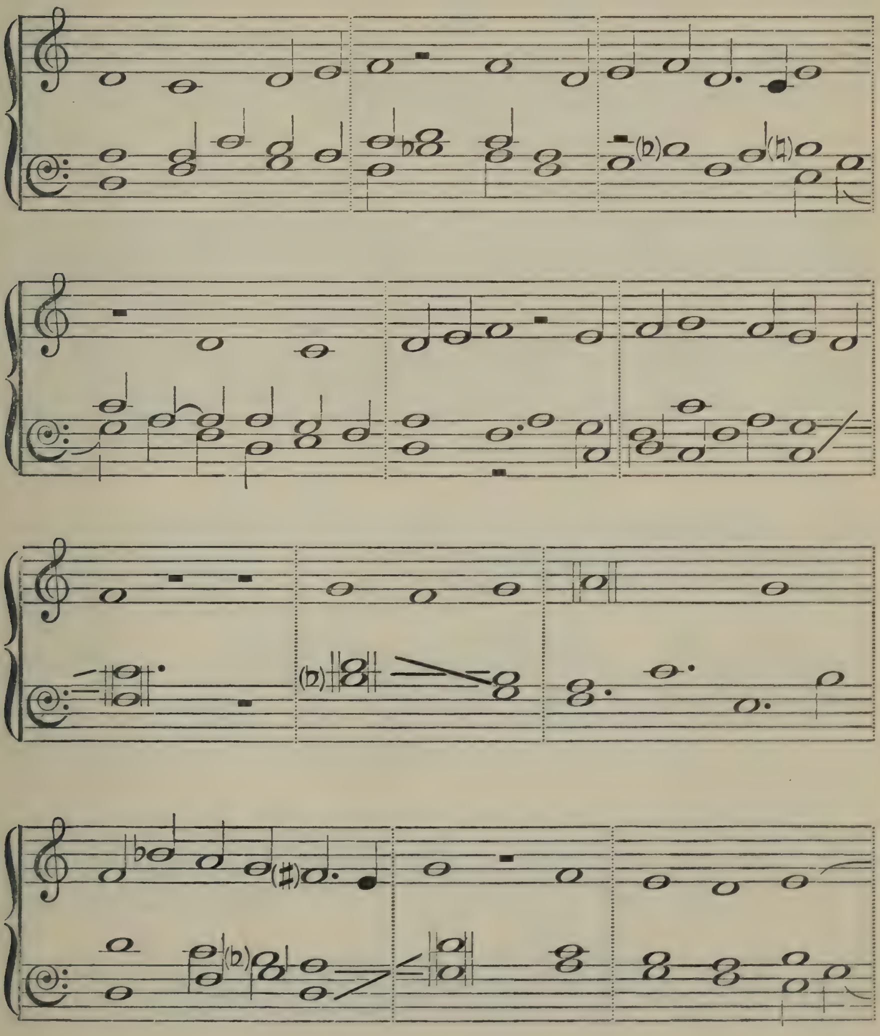
The line of development in Italy and Spain, however, was that of the Motet. How much the English composers would have done, had not the type of Church music been modified by the introduction of the vernacular in 1547, we have no means of knowing. There are a few hymn-compositions extant; relatively speaking, not many. Three will be found in the Historical Introduction to Hymns A. and M. (1904), and one very notable set of counterpoints by Byrd to "Christe qui lux es et dies" has recently been published in the performing edition of "Tudor Church Music." The examples we give below are confined to settings of tunes, such as Ut Queant Laxis, which we have already examined. The first is from an anonymous Flemish composer, *circa* 1500 (B.M. Add. 35087).

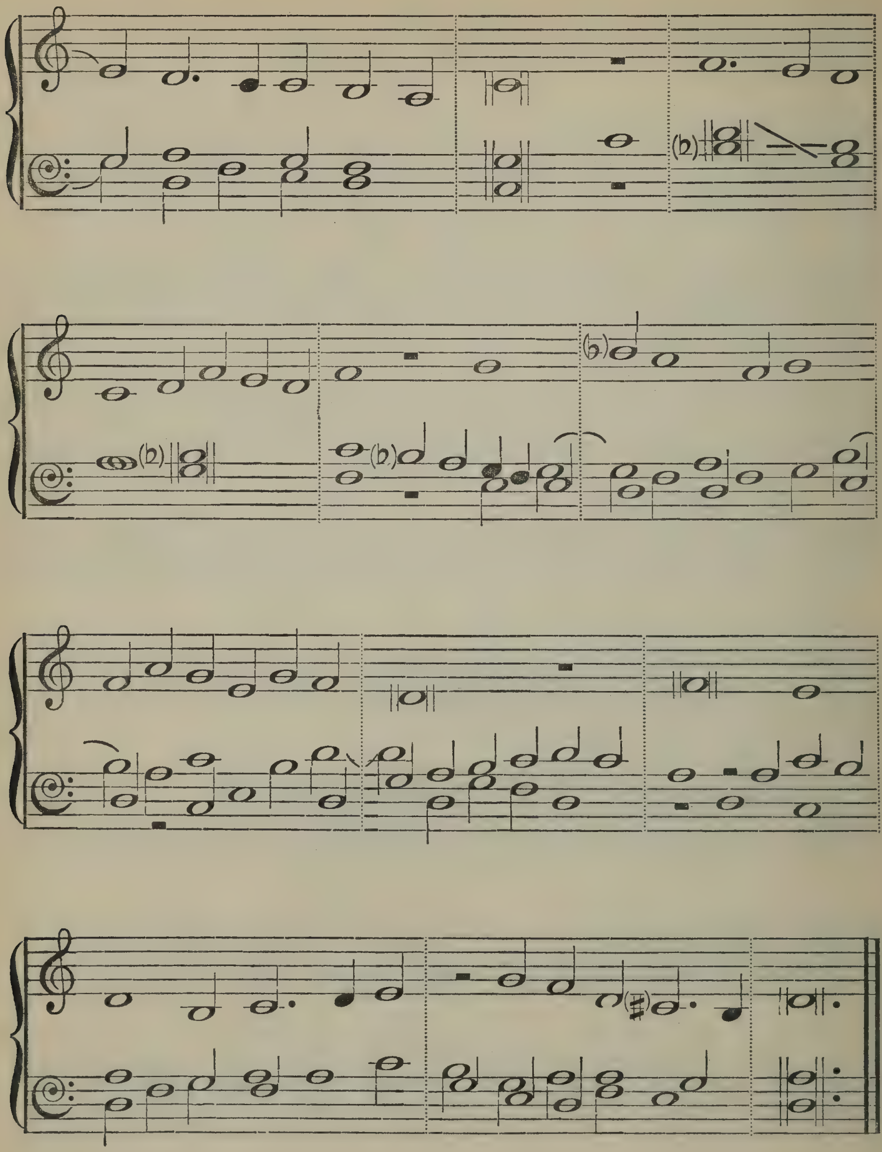




UT QUEANT LAXIS.

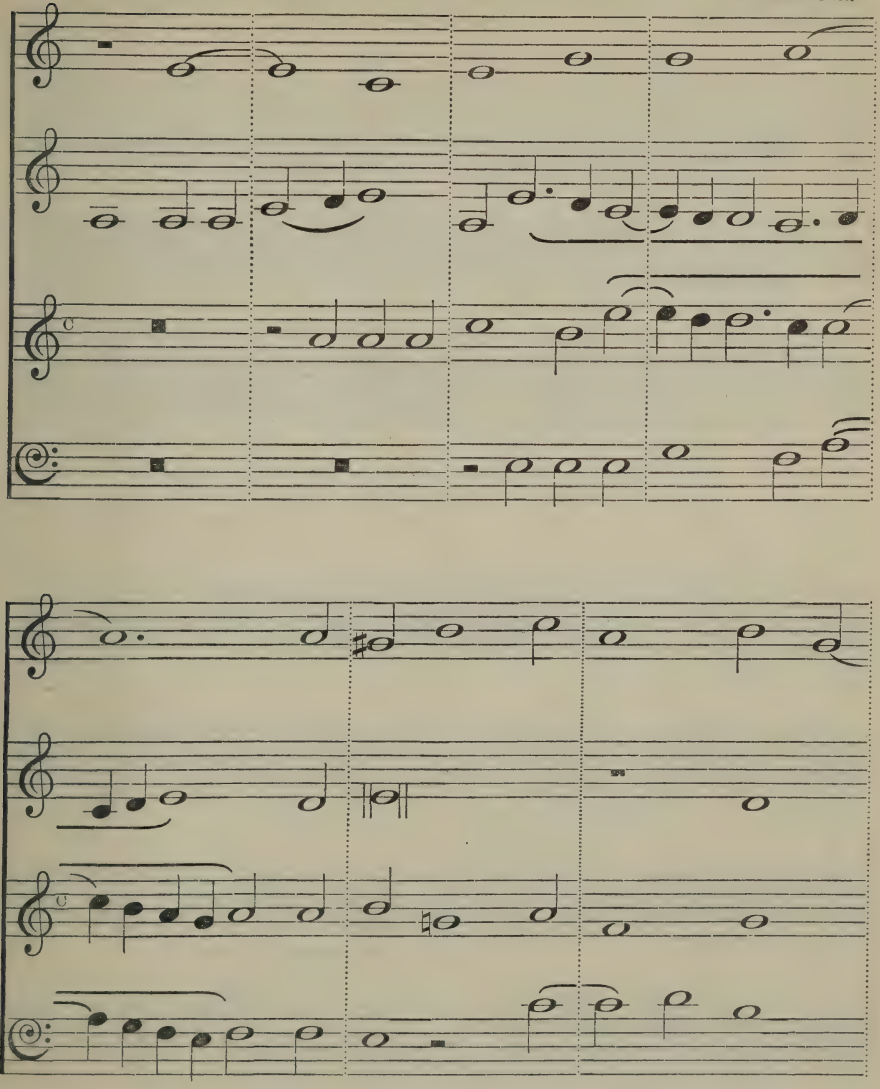
DUFAY,
Trent MS. 92.

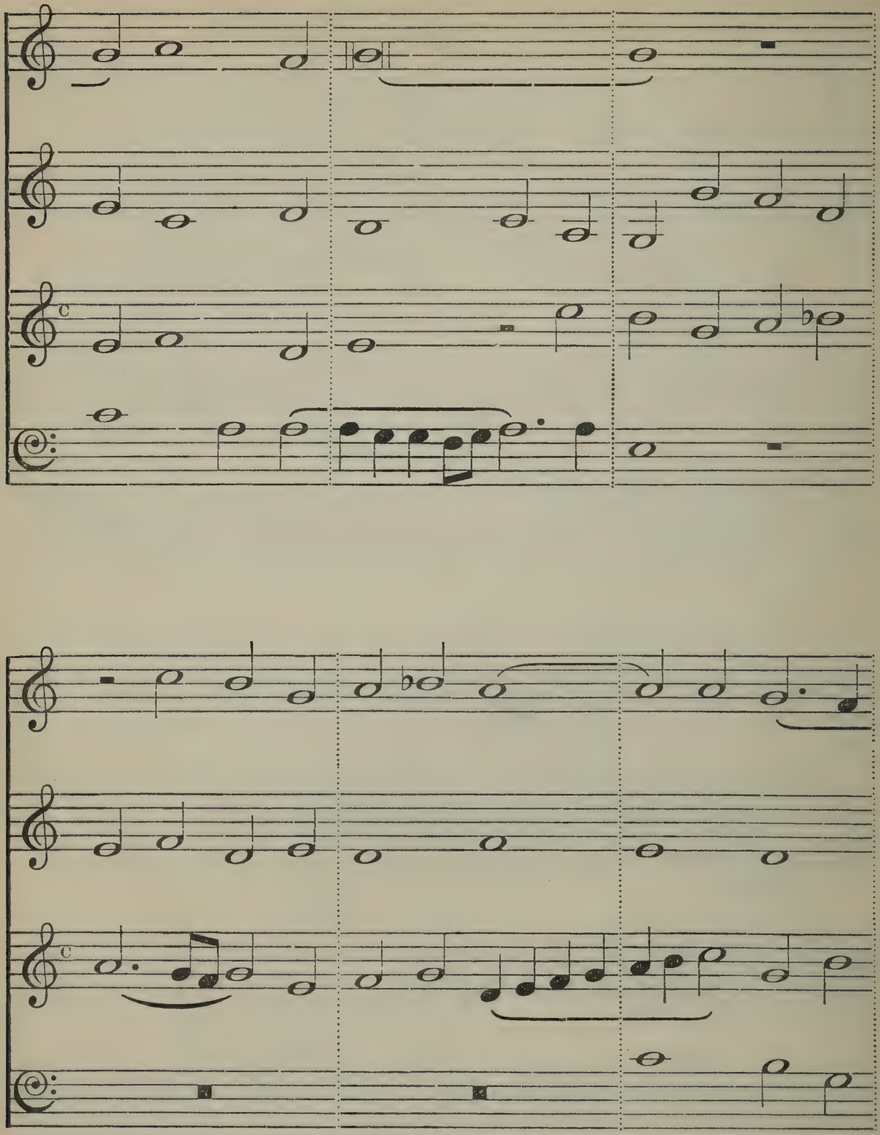


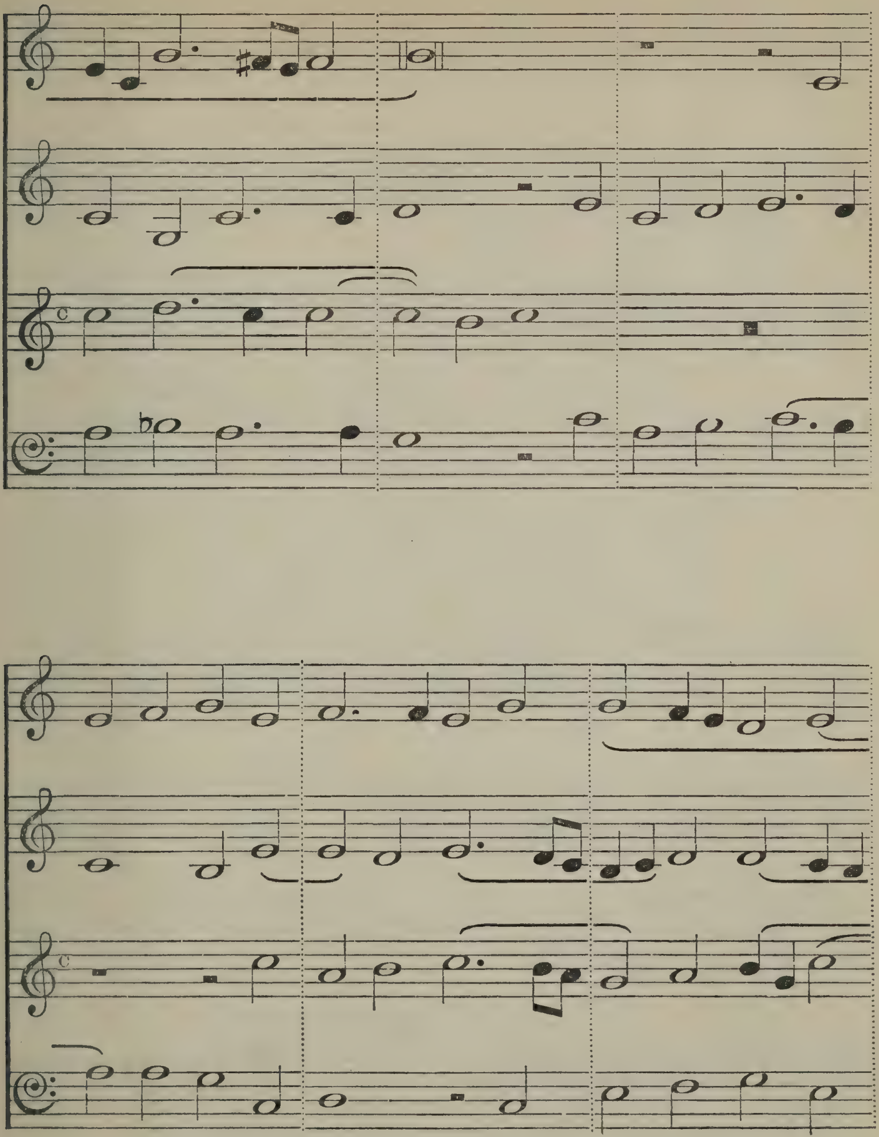


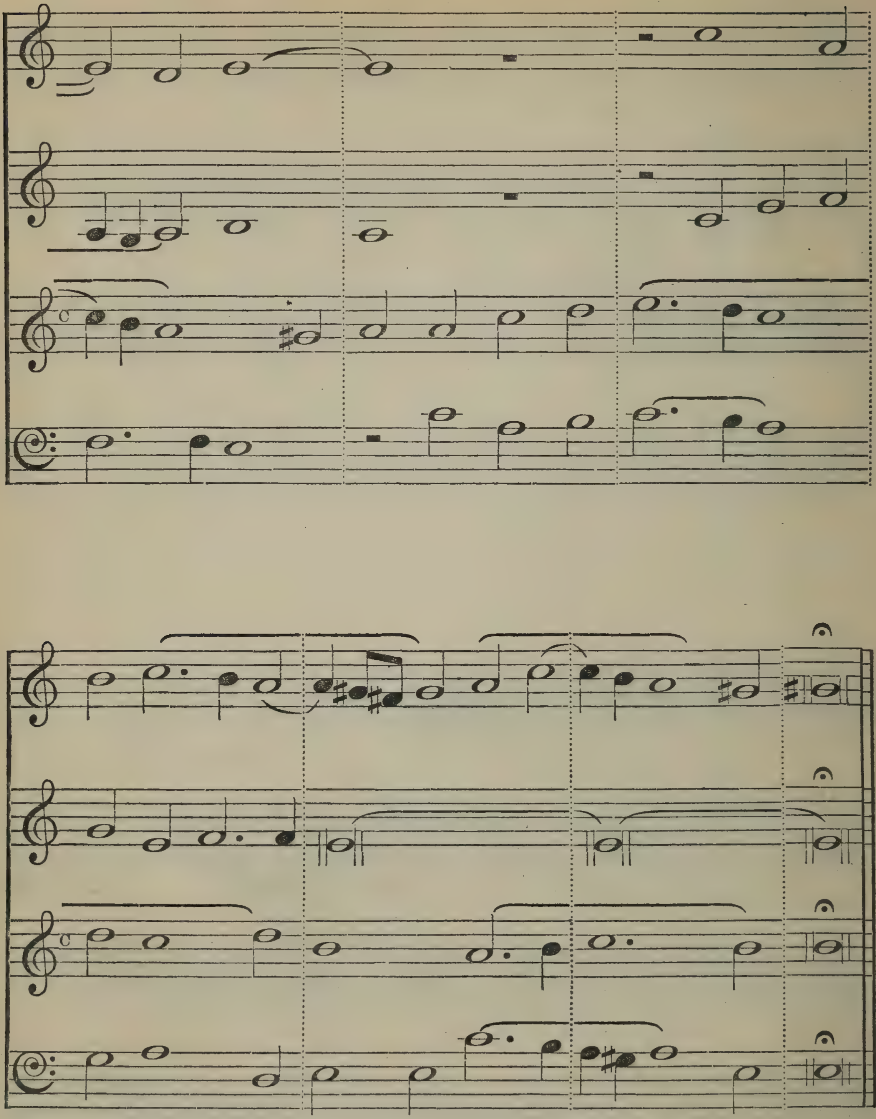
CONDITOR ALME SIDERUM.

PALESTRINA.









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